

will talk keys, chords, discords, etc., for he knows all about that sort of thing, but he can't see why it is that E should be made sharp in the key of F sharp minor, and he generally prefers to note it as F natural in his favorite arrangements. He would of course, were he to write the scale of F sharp minor, have two F's in his scale and no E; but he has never written a scale in his life, and so it don't make any difference. He wasted no time when he took up the study of music; he dove immediately into the science and ignored such trifles as the rudiments.

He can tell you just where any new piece of music or any portion of a melody is "stolen" from. He only has to listen for a minute and it requires no coddling of his subtle brain to tell at once just how much of the new tune is really new and how much is "taken from" some other tune.

But not being familiar with his scales, both diatonic and chromatic, he does not always discover that a new melody which he has passed as entirely original has been simply stolen from an old scale, and that there is really not a new note in the entire piece.

Were he to find this out he would denounce the composer at once as a plagiarist.

MAIL NOTICE.

Customers ordering music, books, heads, strings, etc., sent by mail, must bear in mind that all mail packages are sent at purchasers' risk. Those who desire same registered should remember to send *ten cents* over and above the cost of goods and other postage to pay for the same. We assume no responsibility for the safe delivery of mailed goods of any description. Our responsibility ceases when packages are delivered at the Philadelphia Post Office. All mail orders are filled by us on the same day received.

To avoid delays write your name and P. O. address very plainly on every letter.

ISN'T IT FUNNY THAT WE DON'T GET OUR MAIL?

Here is a specimen of the manner in which some people do business and then wonder why things will go wrong:

Altoona, December 13th, 1887.

S. S. STEWART,

Dear Sir:—About six months ago I sent you a dollar bill for a banjo head, in a letter. I have not yet received it, but a cousin of mine, J. Schmitt, told me the other day that he received one from you but sent it back. Please let me know if this is true.

Yours respectfully,

JOHN F. SCHMITT,

1307 Fifth Avenue.

—Copy of reply to above.—

Philadelphia, Dec. 15th, 1887.

JOHN F. SCHMITT, Altoona, Pa.

Sir:—Your letter of December 13th at hand. Your order for the banjo head was filled last January, nearly a year ago. The package was addressed to JOHN F. SCHMITT, Altoona, Penna., which was precisely the way in which you wrote the direction in your order. Some time after that the package was returned to me through the P. O. Whatever blame may be attached to the matter rests entirely with yourself, not with our office. The package is again mailed you to-day.

Yours, etc.,

S. S. STEWART.

In this instance the customer orders a banjo head, which is mailed as per his directions. He fails however to give his address in detail and another person of similar name receives

the package, which he returns to us. We hear nothing from the party and are left to wonder why the package is returned. Not hearing anything concerning it within a year we should naturally conclude that the person ordering the goods must have taken it into his head to check his baggage for another world, and therefore did not require the banjo head. But it happened in this instance that our customer was still in the flesh, and still pondering upon the unsettled question of his dollar bill and his banjo head—still wondering why Stewart should act the dead beat, but never dreaming that he omitted to give his local address in his order. Pondering diligently upon this he takes little thought of the lapse of time, and a year has nearly closed its jaws around our customer before he begins to think that it has been six months since he ordered a head.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER.

BY A. BAUR.

My first recollection of hearing a banjo played was about the year 1851 or 1852 at a hall on the Bowery nearly opposite the old Bowery Theatre, in New York. I do not now remember the piece or pieces played by the performer or who he was (my age was 6 or 7 years at the time), but I do distinctly remember that he played an air similar to "Jim along Josey" or "Wait for the Wagon." He came on to the stage with a "Good ebenin' white folks," and immediately proceeded to play the melody through in the "old time" style of playing with thimble and striking the fifth string very frequently. After playing the solo through once he sang the song with banjo accompaniment. That the audience was delighted was evinced by the fact that he was repeatedly recalled. The number of times I cannot say, as I fell asleep before he had finished replying to encores. This was the only part of the performance I saw. After the banjo playing I have only a faint recollection of being carried out by my uncle, who had taken me to the "show." I afterwards heard Joe Sweeney and Billy Whitlock (both of whom are claimed by their friends to be the "Father of the Banjo"), Tom Briggs, "Pick" Butler, Charley Plummer, G. Swayne Buckley, Phil. Rice, Hi Rumsey and others. Tom Briggs was famous at that time as a banjo player. His rendition of "Home, Sweet Home," with two short variations, always sat an audience yelling with delight. Poor Tom! Were he to come back and hear the modern banjo, he would not recognize his favorite instrument. I can well remember the time when F on the upper line was thought to be the highest note on the banjo. It was E then. The neck of the banjo was so much longer than now that the natural keys of the instrument were D and G instead of E and A, as now. A very good idea of the old style of banjo playing can be formed by referring to "Brigg's Banjo Instructor," and transposing the pieces one degree higher than they are written in the book. Very few players attempted to play by note, not because they could not learn, but simply because no music had been written for the banjo, and everybody thought it impossible to write music for this instrument. One prominent player once said to me, "Why, I beat them all, I can play twelve complete tunes, such a thing was never heard of before, but it took me a long time to learn them," poor fellow! If he were living now he could find hundreds of amateurs who can play thousands of tunes, or as long as they can sit up and read

music that is published the same as music for other instruments. I heard about all the banjo players of note, many of them I cannot recall by name. Julius Von Bonhorst was quite an effective player in his time. I have regretted many times that I did not buy his old banjo. I could have had it for a trifle, and it would have been a valuable memento. The rim was made of a piece of boiler iron, and was nearly as large in diameter as an ordinary wash tub. The neck was so long I could scarcely reach to the nut. The 4th string (the same old string he had put on) was a violoncello A or 1st. The 3rd was a violin E, the 2nd a violin A, and the 1st was a heavy violin E. The brackets were of all styles and sizes, and looked as if they had been put on at different times and places. I have now in my possession a banjo bridge made in 1855, which is 2½ inches wide. Compare this with a banjo bridge of the present day. The latter measures scarcely 1½ inches.

In 1855, like all boys, I ran away from home and sought work, which I found in a book-bindingery on Spruce street, New York. In my capacity of errand boy I had to take books to the marbler to have the edges marbled. The man who did this work for my employers was said to be the best in the city. His place of business was on the south side of Fulton street, between William and Dutch streets. The entrance was a narrow hallway and up one flight of stairs. In the rear was a door on which the sign "C. Morrell" was tacked. The room, as I remember it, was about 16 or 18 feet wide, and about 24 feet long; before each of the two windows by which the room was lighted was a trough in which the marbler had his sizing and made his colors. Between the two troughs or sinks was a shelf or table. On the right, facing these windows, was a long table. A stove and two or three chairs completed the furniture of the room. I am thus particular in describing the room because it was here that the pioneers of the banjo congregated. Here was laid the foundation of the modern banjo. Every banjo player of note, and every lover of banjo music visited this room, and time and again have I heard the expression "Hello, Charley." "How d'ye do, Pick?" "Come again Jerry." "Where is Neil?" "See my new banjo." "Here's a new tune," &c., &c.

I was at that time 10 or 11 years of age, and took a keen interest in all the doings of the habitues of the place. Many a time I have gone to Morrell's with a dozen or so of books with instructions from my employers to have them done at once and hurry back, and times innumerable have I been told to "shut up," "go and tell Kron and Albrecht that I'm very busy and cannot marble their books to-day." Probably there would be nothing to do but to marble a dozen or so of books I would have with me, but the chairs and long table, and every available spot would be occupied by from two to a dozen. I never arrived at the dignity of occupying a prominent seat. I usually kept in the background where I sat on my package of books and listened to the different players until I dare not stay longer, and would then hurry back to the shop and tell my employers what Morrell had told me. I never missed being sent back to tell Mr. Morrell that the books must be done that day or not at all. I never allowed the "grass to grow under my feet" until I got back to where the banjo playing was going on. Life was made miserable for me between Morrell threatening to "break my jaw" if I bothered him, and Mr. Albrecht's threatening to discharge me if I spent so much time at Morrell's. I often wished I was big enough to "lick" Charley, but have long since forgiven him, and wondered for years what had become of him. I never lost an opportunity to inquire of nearly every "old time" banjo player if he ever knew a banjo player named Morrell. About 15 years ago I asked some one the ques-

tion, and the answer was "why there is a banjo player in San Francisco by that name, but I can not say where he came from." I always suspected that I had at last located my man, but was not certain until six or seven years ago I saw one of Morrell's circulars, in which he "gave himself away" by stating that parties desiring it could have their banjo heads beautifully marbled, or words to that effect. Charley Morrell is, without doubt, now the oldest banjo player living. He could give the present banjo players some very interesting reminiscences of the banjo of 30 or 35 years ago. I can remember when on at least one or two occasions there was to be a banjo match with most of the prominent performers of the day participating. Charlie was consulted by every one and on all sides, and was kept so busy that he marbled less books, and consequently I got more scoldings than ever. If I remember right, he made one or two of the banjos that were intended as prizes; at least I distinctly recollect of his showing the instruments to some one who came in. They talked for some time about the match, looking over the banjos carefully. In the meantime more players come in, and before the day was over nearly everybody had tried his favorite instrument. Speaking of banjo contests or matches reminds me of one that took place in Steinway Hall, New York, in 1883, and it may interest some banjo players to know why the prizes were not awarded to the best players. The question is simple and easily answered. The only consideration of any value after the receipts of the hall were safe in the pockets of the projectors of the contest, were the medals to be awarded to the contestants who should be awarded first prize for picking, and the medal for stroke playing. In my opinion this question was decided some time before the contest. At that time I was located in New York City, and took much interest in the banjo. As the banjo match was well advertised, it was looked forward to by all lovers of the instrument as a rare treat in store for them. About every player of note, at least those belonging to New York and vicinity, had been announced to take part; and as the date drew near everybody was on tiptoe of expectation in anticipation of the good things in store for them. I admit I was as much interested and excited over it as any one well could be, and will candidly confess I was nearly unfit for any kind of business. My thoughts being constantly on the banjo contest, when, if all advertised promises were kept, we should have the pleasure of listening to such an aggregation of talent as is seldom a man's privilege to behold. Three or four days before the contest, however, I came to the conclusion that the best man could not win, consequently lost interest in the affair. The cause of my change of feeling was this: I felt such an interest in the matter that I frequently, on my way down town in the morning, would stop at the office of the managers of the affair to see how the prize banjos were progressing. I decided in my own mind, though, that the most valuable part of the banjos was the metal plate on which was to be engraved the name of the victor in each class of players, but could not resist the temptation to "take in the whole show." I watched the workmen build the banjos up from the very foundation, and really wanted to see "fair play," when, like a thunder clap from a clear sky, the whole arrangement took unto itself an entirely different shape. One morning I talked, and after looking over the banjos and talking with the principal manipulator of the scheme, he surprised me by saying, "Al, we would like to have you act as one of the judges in the coming match." I immediately replied, "No—I can make enough enemies without acting as judge for a banjo contest." He answered, "Well, the case stands just this way: The Dobson's originated the idea. The Dobson's have hired and will pay for the hall. The Dobson's have

done all the advertising and work, and paid for the prizes, and by — they are going to appoint the judges." He did not say, "And the Dobson's will award the prizes to whoever they see fit," but he might just as well have said so, for from that moment I lost all confidence and interest in the affair, and was convinced that under no circumstances would the match terminate otherwise than as these men willed it.

On the afternoon of the day of the match I was called upon at my office by a party who wished me to act as judge for Mr. Horace Weston. I told him I did not think I could do so. He then gave me a note which read as follows: NEW YORK, April 30, 1883.

MR. BAUR,

Dear Sir:—Can you possibly meet Mr. Horace Weston this evening by seven o'clock at 147 Bleecker street, to act as judge in this banjo contest on his behalf, and oblige.

FRANK CONVERSE,
Per W. S. P.

"W. S. P.," who signed the above note, is W. Stewart Pond, son of Mr. William A. Pond, the well-known music publisher, of New York. I did not feel at liberty to tell what I thought would be the outcome of the contest, or my reasons for thinking so; I therefore simply declined to act. Had I consented and met Mr. Weston, I would have been obliged to give him my reasons for not wanting to act. This I did not care to do at the time. At the contest that evening it was so plain that the judges had been appointed and prizes awarded before the contest, that I became disgusted, and left long before the farce was over. Mr. Converse afterwards told me that he had been asked by Mr. Weston to act for him, but having an idea how it would end he declined. In a conversation with one of the winners (?) of the two gold medals awarded that evening, he told me, pointing with pride to the medal on his breast: "This is what I won at the banjo match." That he and his brother were not playing for banjos; that the match was to decide who excelled in picking, or the guitar style, and who excelled in stroke, or banjo style of playing. This was another revelation to me, as nothing of the kind had ever been mentioned or possibly even thought of except by the originators of the fiasco. They accomplished what they started out to do, *i. e.*, put quite a snug sum of money in their pockets, and retained the medals, which, next to the money taken in, were the most valuable part of the business.



The banjo world continues on the move.

Horace Weston, the famous colored banjoist, called recently. He had been travelling with Hick's Georgia minstrels.

Truman P. Reitmeyer, Lewisburg, Pa., is an ardent admirer of the banjo. He writes that he has derived benefit from perusing *The Banjo Philosophically*, by Stewart.

J. Brittain Beers, teacher of the banjo, Bethlehem, Pa., sends us a number of new subscribers to the *Journal*.

M. J. Betz, No. 1003 Ridge Avenue, deals in all musical instruments. He also teaches the banjo.

The Marques Family, consisting of father, mother and children, are giving neat entertainments through the West.

W. G. Collins, Washington, D. C., wrote recently: "I want to say a good word for the banjo I presented to the Odd Fellows some time ago. The society made more money out of it than any other article voted for. It is a magnificent instrument in tone and workmanship."

Charles G. Taylor, Boston, in a recent letter says: "I purchased one of your banjos from Dr. Bartlett, of Milton, about a year ago. I have played the banjo for the last seven years, and during that time I have owned instruments of nearly every good make in the country, and I must say that yours is the finest toned one I have ever handled."

W. Vanderpool, played banjo at the Ocala Music House, Florida, on the evening of November 19th last. He was accompanied on the piano by Professor Pike.

Edw. C. Gilson, Orange, N. J., says he likes the *Journal* immensely.

Thomas H. Kelly sends us the following clipping from a paper in Newport, N. H.:

"The festival held by the Newport Drum Corps last Thursday evening was very successful so far as regards the stage entertainment, the supper and the occasion as a social affair. The banjo quartette did splendidly, and were heartily encored. Misses Paul and Chase did excellent work in two duets, and Miss Comstock sang with her usual acceptance. Fred Gamash displayed a good deal of skill in Indian club swinging, and a banjo solo by Mr. Titcomb completely brought down the house. The drum corps gave a sample of what they could do in their line and then all who wished danced to the music of the Newport Orchestra. By reason of rain the attendance was not so large as it otherwise would have been; nevertheless, the entire proceeds footed up to a good figure."

F. C. Adams, Franklin, Pa., has an old time Farnham banjo.

The Omaha Lodge, No. 39, of the B. P. O. E., held a social in their room on the evening of November 23d last, complimentary to the officers of Fort Omaha, on which occasion Messrs. Gillenbeck and Mangold made a hit in their banjo duets.

Pemberton W. Willard, proprietor of the Japanese Village, recently purchased a fine Stewart banjo which he intends to take with him to Australia, India and Japan.

E. J. Campbell is teaching the banjo in East Troy, Penna.

R. O. Goldsmith, Bennington, Vt., is said to be a competent banjo teacher.

W. J. Scott, banjo teacher of New York City, is doing well.

Charles C. Bertholdt, banjo instructor, teaches in St. Louis.

L. E. Scott, Brockton, Mass., has more pupils than any other teacher in that locality.

D. Emerson, New York, continues to publish his banjo compositions.

Mrs. William Frier, New Britain, Conn., writes: "I find all music I get from you is just immense."

Miss Elma F. Mills, Ishpeming, Mich., writes: "I receive the *Journal* regularly, and think I could not do without it. I have often wondered why I did not subscribe for it before. I think it is a great help, at least it has been to me."

L. G. Chrisman, Sigourney, Iowa, says: "Please find enclosed 50 cents for your *Journal* for another year. I would not do without it for five times its cost. The information it contains is worth more than three times its cost, not saying anything about the music."

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER.

(SECOND LETTER.)

BY A. BAUR.

"In the big age" when players as well as good banjos were not as plentiful as they are now, it was a treat to hear the instrument well played. When a good performer came to town it did not take long to become known to those who were in the neighborhood. Very often I have gone a great distance to hear a banjo player, only to be disappointed in the performance because it happened to be a damp evening and the old tack head banjo had to be warmed up before the performer could proceed. I have frequently seen a player hold his banjo in his left hand, and with his right hand, before he could go on with his act. Wrenches were almost unknown, or would have been useless unless they had been made adjustable, for if the banjo happened to have brackets the nuts would vary in size from one-half to three-quarters of an inch; and various tricks were worked out by the players. I have seen banjos with holes drilled through the top hoop and corresponding ones in the rim; cords were drawn through these holes, and on the cords were ears similar to drum tighteners. Before playing, the performer would tighten up the head of his banjo with a wrench, and then he would play in such a manner that the ears would pull in some many of this style of tighteners, but a man having a banjo constructed in this manner thought himself above the ordinary mortal who owned a simple tack head banjo. Many of the wood rims were made of cheese boxes which were obtained from the corner grocery, and it was a shame to see them so abused. Nearly every banjo player has had his hobby for getting up an "improved banjo." I met one once while he was at the height of his craze, and expected to make a fortune just as soon as he saw fit to begin manufacturing them. He imagined that after the first banjo was made, he would have no more getting hands and material enough to supply the demand. After a great deal of talk, I agreed to take one and try it. It took him about three weeks to get a rim properly bent; when it was ready for putting a head on he showed me the rim. Instead of being circular it was like a horse shoe in purpose, he claimed, of getting better vibration than from a circular head. After it had reached this stage a new trouble arose—an ordinary sheep or calf-skin would not answer at all for a head, and it took several more weeks visiting the different slaughter-houses before he succeeded in getting a head like a horse shoe, the horn calf. When at last it was finished, an evening was set apart for a trial of the coming banjo, after several disapprovements he told me he did not think he understood how to draw a head down properly, but would bring the banjo the next evening, when I could draw it down for him. He was not to be disappointed, I was my enthusiast and his banjo. We never got the head tight; the more we pulled it down with a wrench the closer together the oblong sides came. The experiment was a failure, and with it died all the fond hopes and bright visions of a future never heard of him attempting to play a banjo from that evening to the day of his death.

Dave Jacobs, on Grand street near the Bowery, made a good banjo for that time, afterward there was an "Original Jacobs," on Chatham near Pearl street, who was said to make a specialty of fine banjos. His trade, however, was not exclusively banjos, he dealt in all sorts of instruments, and made a great display of his wares. I shall never forget the first nickel, or German silver rim banjo I ever saw. It was

made someone up the Hudson, at Albany or Troy, by Farnham or Wilson. I thought at the time it was the most exquisite piece of workmanship I had ever seen. Compared with the banjo of the present day, the Albany banjo of the time the banjo began to "move along," and banjo teachers multiplied. Among them I remember Dan Emmett, Chas. Plummer, Phil. Rice, John J. Boggs, H. C. Dobson, Frank B. Converse, Lew. Brimmer, and others. As the banjo improved, and good players became numerous. The outlook brightened considerably, notwithstanding the fact that many narrow-minded persons were ever ready to assert that the banjo was not a musical instrument, but a "negro instrument," and that the "negroes of the South," who had invented, and to whom the instrument properly belonged.

There never was a greater mistake than this. Go where you will, North or South, you will find twenty negroes playing the violin or guitar to every one who plays the banjo.

I heard a performance once on the banjo that would have been considered remarkable if it had been rendered upon any other instrument. In fact, Blind Tom, the phenomenal pianist, won thousands of applause, and owes much of his subsequent fame to the piano, which he played three pieces of music at the same time. He played "Yankee Doodle" and "Fishers Hornpipe" on the piano, and sang "Tramp, Tramp" all at the same time. The performance of which I speak consisted of the player executing "Wait for the Wagon," in E major, and "Yankee Doodle" on the banjo, while he sang the song "Old Joe Tray," in D major. The two tunes were as plain and distinct, as if played upon two separate banjos, and the vocal part could have been no better. There is no comparison between the two. Blind Tom had the whole fingerboard of the piano to work with, while the banjo player has only the five strings—two of which he could not finger. There is only this difference in the two performances, Blind Tom is known far and wide for his wonderful rendition of three pieces of music at one and the same time, while the performer upon the lowly banjo is forgotten. I have often regretted that I could not remember the name of the player, but the circumstance under which I heard him were such that it is not to be wondered at that I forgot who it was; it was during the war, and I had been severely wounded and taken home to New York. The doctors had decided that I could not recover unless I had a change of air, and I was sent to the States to gain sufficient strength to travel that my friends, wishing to brighten me up and knowing my fondness for the banjo, brought the player of whom I speak to my room. Shortly afterwards I left New York and did not return for six years. Immediately upon my return I made acquaintance with the person who had played for my friends, but did not know what to come of him. They had heard him play, and brought him to my room to amuse me. After his visit they never saw him again. He played other pieces, but the three I speak of were so much out of the common run of performances that I could never forget them. He was often tried to arrange for the "Wagon" and "Yankee Doodle" as he played it, but my efforts always ended in dismal failures.

During the war period the factory banjo made its appearance. This brings me to a point of interest to all banjo players, professional and amateur. The legitimate and the factory-made banjo. Some people (who know better) imagine there is no difference. This is a mistake. There is as much difference between the factory-made banjo and one constructed by a man who understands his business, as there is between a well-made custom shoe and a prison-made brogan, and it is just here where the majority of beginners fail. They think anything

will answer to learn on. It is just as impossible to learn to play on an inferior or imperfectly constructed instrument as it is to run a train of cars without a locomotive. You could run the train with horses, or push it by hand, but you would be a long time "getting there."

I do not mean to say a person cannot learn to play at all on a poorly-constructed banjo, but there a great many chances that a person with "an ear for music" will become disgusted with a poor-toned instrument and throw it aside, thinking that all are like the one just discarded, and nothing thereafter will convince him that there is any music in a banjo. The opposition from this quarter might be easily overcome if intending purchasers would exercise the same judgment in the matter of buying a banjo that they do in purchasing other articles.

The following advertisement appeared in a recent number of a New York musical journal, a paper ready at any time to cry down the banjo and say it is not a musical instrument.

A FINE BANJO, 38 Brackets, Nickel Rim, Raised Frets.
Only \$6.50. All other styles from \$1.00 to \$11.00.
Call or address: See

The advertiser is a dealer in musical instruments, who would not for the world be thought of anything but upright and honest in his dealings. His advertisement speaks volumes, and shows him to be either a man without brains or a knave. He evidently thinks that the purchaser of a banjo seeks quantity and not quality. He probably imagines "a fine banjo with 38 brackets for \$6.50, and all other styles for from \$1.00 to \$10.00" is sufficient inducement to set the banjo world crazy. But it does not enter into his thick skull that \$10.00, the price of his best banjo, would not pay for finishing the neck of a respectable banjo.

I think from the tone of this man's advertisement, that he must be handling the Benari (or Benary) Banjos. Of all cheap and vile factory banjos the Benari is the cheapest and the vilest. A specialty in that line, while I resided in New York, was an extensively advertised 38 bracket banjo. They are handled by many music dealers because they are cheap.

There are several banjo factories in Williamsburg, but they manufacture mostly cheap instruments.

A Banjo factory is a very interesting place to visit. J. H. Buckbee, of New York, probably has the largest banjo factory in the world, and turns out the best of that class of work. He supports a large staff of workmen in his factory, and music houses in New York, and also makes banjos for a number of teachers and dealers who stamp them with their trade mark, and sell them as their own manufacture. Some of them are made of wood, some of metal. The banjos are put together just the same as those he makes for the trade. The banjo factory has no use for high-priced or skilled labor, any cheap man or boy who can fit the parts together, and who can tune them, will do the work. The handles are sawed out by the hundred and thousands, and piled up like cord-wood. Workmen in a banjo factory are valued according to their ability to put together a great number of banjos. A man who can tune a banjo, a mechanic or man who knows anything about the instruments. Each part of the banjo is made in its own particular department. The necks are either pushed or gone over hurriedly by a small boy, or a girl, or a woman.

through. The more banjos made in a day, the cheaper the material and the more saved, the greater will be the manufacturer's profit. When the different parts are brought together it does not make much difference whether the neck is warped or whether the parts go together in a neat manner; all that is necessary is for the neck to go into the rim, where it is fastened with a screw. The pegs are put in the holes made for them. The nuts are screwed on the

end of the hook, and may or may not screw all the way up. A cheap set of strings is put on, and the banjo is ready for shipment. No waste of time or material; no inspectors, and no thought or care as to what becomes of them, so long as they are sold and paid for. The buyers are generally middlemen, who sell to the trade, consequently the instrument must be gotten up cheaply so as to insure enough profit, first for the factory, next for the wholesale dealer, and still another for the retailer.

Some of the cheaper factories have rims by the hundred, covered with metal and then dipped in the galvanizing solution. The metal is covered with so thin a coating that it wears off in a short time. When any of the solution discolors the inside of the wood rim a coat of black varnish is put on to hide it. Some of them fasten a piece of bamboo on the inside of the rim on the upper side next the head; this bamboo is shaved off and painted with bronze paint, so that when the head is put on it looks as if the metal rim extended under the head.

It is rare that the maker of a banjo in any legitimate manner in which the shop of the maker of legitimate banjos is managed. The workmen are the most skillful that money can obtain. The material must be the very best. No odds and ends are used. He makes no banjos for the trade, but sells direct to the consumer, as it were, therefore he has no need of a perfect material, and consequently, what he cannot use is a total loss. After the material is carefully selected it is worked up, the utmost care being taken in fitting every part together to a nicety. After this the instrument is thoroughly tested and inspected, and if, after repeated trials, it is found to be perfect in every detail, the maker sends his banjo out with his reputation staked upon it.

The proprietor is generally an expert player, and makes a personal examination of every instrument before it is sent to his customer.

There are now so many respectable and well-known men manufacturing the legitimate banjo that it seems strange that purchasers are so often inveigled into buying the worthless trash that is sent out from the banjo factory. The writer knows whereof he speaks; having been called upon frequently by music houses to look over, and put in order their stock of banjos. I very seldom found one that did not need some "doctoring" to make it saleable, and never came across one that would have been considered even a passably good banjo by an expert. Time is working changes, however. Within the last two or three years some of the best music houses have taken to selling the different makes of good banjos.

Notwithstanding all that has been or can be said against the factory banjos, there are men who, by persistent advertising, have acquired somewhat of a reputation either as performers, teachers or dealers, who do not hesitate to sell the factory banjo as their own.

The following I knew to be a fact when I left New York three years ago, and since then I have kept pretty thoroughly posted and have no reason to believe that there has been any change made by the parties named below: The "Frank B. Converse" Banjos, so extensively advertised by J. F. Stratton of New York, are all made by J. H. Buckbee, at the factory named above. The "Victor" Banjo, sold by George C. Dobson, of Boston, is made by Buckbee. C. Bruno & Son and Howard Foote, and many other dealers of New York also have their banjos made by Buckbee. H. C. Converse has a factory of his own. I never could find it, and I am almost positive he patronizes some factory. He may have a workman employed to put his instruments together. If he has, the necks, rims, etc., come from some factory. The "Bell" Banjo shows this in every detail.

He did not make the clock back banjo. At one time every pawnbroker and dealer in

second-hand wares in New York had from one to a dozen closed back banjos for sale. They cost to manufacture, good, bad and indifferent, between four and five dollars each. I do not recollect the exact amount, but know it was not above five dollars. He may have paid more for an occasional one that was more elaborately ornamented, but his ordinary banjos cost the price given above.

Chas E. Dobson, about five years ago; started to make an "Egyptian Harp" (or some such name) Banjo, but soon discontinued its manufacture. I never could learn the reason. I understood it was to be the acme of perfection. The rims, necks and material for this banjo were all purchased in quantities from other dealers, and a cheap workman "rubbed them up" and put them together.

Ed. C. Dobson took with him to London in 1884, about 200 Buckbee banjos, costing from four to nine dollars each. These he advertised for sale at from four to ten pounds each. The Dobsons ought certainly to know the difference between good and an inferior banjo, and all grew up with one in their hands, and have been in the "whirl" for the last generation or two. If I am not mistaken I saw their father making a banjo when they were boys, and I was too small almost to carry one.

There are many teachers in New York, and I presume in other cities as well, who buy necks, rims, etc., from the factory, and by inlaying a pearl or silver ornament here and there, and taking special pains in finishing up the handle before putting the instrument together, they so effectually disguise it as to make it an easy matter to palm off on an inexperienced person at their own make, throughout; but by far the largest number buy the banjo from the factory all finished.

There are a number of small dealers in New York who employ a workman or two to do repairing, and as there is not enough of this to keep the hands busy, they buy a supply of handles, rims and material from the factory, and put them together to sell to music stores; each man putting on a finish and extra ornamentation according to his taste or ability. Some of these men make banjos to order for pawnbrokers, in imitation of any well-known make of banjo that may be desired; and no doubt exists in my mind that many a person has bought a banjo from some pawnbroker who represented it to be a Stewart or some other well-known make.

At one time it was thought no one but the late James W. Clarke could make a good banjo, and nearly all professionals tried themselves on owning one or more Clarke instruments. I often met Clarke, and he was anxious to make me a banjo. His price for a certain style was \$40, but he offered to make one for me for \$35. I had at that time several banjos that I considered fully as good as his, therefore did not purchase from him, but had my mind about made up to have him make me one. For some reason or other I never gave him the order. After Clarke's death I was going down the Bowery one day, and in passing one of the numerous pawnshops that line that thoroughfare, I saw a banjo that I had never before looked at. Upon closer inspection from the outside, I looked at a Clarke. I stepped inside and inquired whose make it was. The reply "it is a Clarke," and an unredeemed pledge, and as they had more banjos on hand than they cared to carry he would sell it for \$20. He ought to have more, but I did not rather than keep it on hand. He then took the banjo out of the window and gave it to me for inspection. It did not take a moment to discover that it was an imitation, Clarke had a peculiarly unworkmanlike way of countersinking the hooks into the top hoop. This peculiarity was particularly marked at the same time I noticed the fastening inside of the neck, the neck firm looked like work I had seen

on banjos of a certain make. I told the man I would not purchase them, and immediately went to the maker whom I suspected had made the banjo. I took him off his guard by saying "Hello! are you hard up?" I saw one of your banjos in a pawnbroker's on the Bowery. He answered, "Why, it was agreed that neither of us was to say anything about it. I made the imitation Clarke Banjo, and made several before for him. He pays me \$11 each for them." I was afterwards offered two of these banjos by a prominent music dealer, who told me in confidence that he had bought two Clarke Banjos from a professional who needed money. The dealer was honest, and had been taken in. I did not buy the banjos, nor did I enlighten him, and suppose he sold them in good faith, and they are now being offered to some one as genuine "Jimmy" Clarke Banjos. You see it is hardly safe for even a person of experience to buy a banjo from any but responsible parties. There is no excuse at this late day, however, for the most inexperienced to make a mistake. There are many who want, and they will order it from makers in different parts of the country, but as some prefer this, others that make of banjos, my advice to anyone intending to purchase is to look up some responsible maker, get his prices and order a banjo. Or, if you prefer to purchase from a music store, tell them what kind of banjo you want, and they will order it from the maker, but would rather sell one out of stock, especially if it is a factory-made made banjo, as there is more profit in it. But do not wear yourself out running from store to store asking prices and trying instruments. Unless you are really an expert you could not tell the difference between any number of banjos you may try, and the chances are very much in favor of your buying a factory tub in the end, and not knowing you have been made a victim until you hear a real banjo and become convinced of your folly.

"MILO," THE PONY.

Milo, the Shetland pony, whose portrait graces a page in this issue, was purchased nearly a year ago, when only a few years old, of Mr. Mathew J. Collins, manager of the New Philadelphia Cattle Stables, No. 1211 Vine Street, this city. The pony was originally imported and broken to harness for the use of the family of John S. Garrett, Esq., of Philadelphia, but owing to the little girl's going away to school, it was decided to sell the pony, and S. S. Stewart became the purchaser, since which time the animal has been the special property and pet of Masters Fred and Lem Stewart. The pony has now grown to be about 46 inches high, and developed into an active, free trotter in harness, and a trotter and runner under the saddle. It is a sorrel in color, and since the picture from which the engraving was made has been taken, he has been closely clipped and his tail "banged," and he is more handsome than ever.

Of course there are plenty of ponies to be had, many of which can be bought under the hammer at horse auctions as low as \$60 or \$70, but the majority of such are those which have never been in harness and never had shoes on their feet, and are therefore dear bargains at any price, as the constant exercise and care required in breaking them and getting all the original balthiness out of them runs up the cost to quite a high figure. Such a pony as Milo is to-day can rarely be had under \$200 or \$250.

Mr. Stewart has also a very handsome black saddle horse, purchased of Mr. Collins, who bought him at the spring sale of Kentucky thoroughbreds, Lexington, Kentucky, for \$1,000. The horse and pony are well known about Ardmore, where Mr. Stewart resides at present, as well as in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.



A correspondent writes that she will have to "throw up" the banjo, owing to the fact that during the recent hot period it cost her thirty cents in a single week for strings. She wants to know why it is that strings break—or if it is the fault of the banjo.

ANSWER—Such letters are excusable when coming from a woman. From a man they would be too insignificant for notice. To consider the matter of thirty cents in a hot week for strings is indeed something frightful. Why! just think how many hair-pins that sum would purchase for a woman, and how many glasses of beer for a man. Such persons should keep one, two, three or five horses for a while and compare the expense of keeping a horse with the expense of keeping a banjo. Some of them would "throw up," indeed, if the food did not cost so much. Hot weather will break strings—especially when the air is heavy and murky. Then again many players are victims to perspiring fingers, which also helps to break strings. Long and sharp finger-nails are another cause for strings breaking. Sometimes the tail-piece cuts them. When this is found to be so, just take a piece of an old "bass string" and run it through the holes until the sharp edge is removed.

A little practical experience is necessary to all performers, whether it be upon the banjo or any other instrument.

A correspondent in the good old State of New Hampshire sends us the following:

"Although I have a banjo, I may desire to buy another one some time in the future, and would like to get information on a few points. 1. What would be the difference in tone between a banjo with a nineteen-inch neck and twelve-inch rim, and one with eighteen-inch neck and thirteen-inch rim? Which would be apt to be the loudest, other things being equal? 2. If you have been playing on an ordinary banjo (nineteen-inch neck and eleven-inch rim), and want a more powerful one, will you get what you want if you get a banjo with a $12\frac{1}{2}$ inch rim and a $17\frac{1}{2}$ in. neck, which will not be any more difficult to finger? 3. The size of the rim remaining the same, what will be the effect of lengthening the neck? Will it make the tone louder or sharper? 4. Of two banjos of the same size rim (12 inch) to be made with raised frets and to be 'picked,' which will be the loudest and sharpest, one with an eighteen-inch or one with a nineteen-inch neck?

I enclose a stamp for a reply and hope you will answer my questions."

ANSWER—There is an old saying that any fool can ask a question, but it requires a wise man to answer. We do not, in this case, for one moment, mean to insinuate that our correspondent is a fool, nor that we are correspondingly wise enough to reply in a satisfactory manner to each of his questions. We have not, however, the time to answer such queries by mail, even when a stamp is enclosed to pay the postage on such a reply, but will give our opinion on the different questions for the benefit of our correspondent, as well as for other readers.

1. The length of the neck has little to do with the banjo's being loud or soft. The requisites for producing a loud or soft-toned instrument lie in the head and rim part mainly. When a longer neck is put in a rim, the length of vibrating string is of course increased. Now, providing you have the same rim, the nineteen-inch neck will cause the strings to be drawn more tense in order to tune it to the same pitch as the rim with the eighteen-inch neck was tuned. This will cause it to sound sharper or louder, but should the tuning be in accordance with the increased length of neck—that is, the same tension used on the strings—it is not probable that the instrument with nineteen-inch neck will sound any louder or softer than the same rim with an eighteen-inch neck. By taking the length of vibrating string from over the neck and placing more of it over the rim—as is the case when the neck is shortened and the rim enlarged

—there is an increased *body* of tone generally; as is seen in our banjeaurines over banjos of smaller size rim with longer necks, but having the same length of string.

2. Not always. You may get a banjo made with a $12\frac{1}{2}$ inch rim and $17\frac{1}{2}$ inch neck and find that it is not nearly so musical or so loud as the one with 11 inch rim and 19 inch neck. Such rules are good enough for schoolboys to calculate on, but are shown not to be exact in the manufacture of musical instruments. Take the violin for instance, everyone knows that two instruments may be constructed precisely alike in size and from presumably the same woods, and yet one of them is louder or more musical than the other.

3. Our reply to query number one embraces this also—likewise query four.

It must also be taken into consideration that the larger the rim of the banjo is, the more stretching capacity will the head have, and the more liable will it be to absorb dampness, which in itself detracts from the power and beauty of tone.

A correspondent in Arlington, Mass., writes:

"Enclosed please find stamp for copy of *Adventures of a Banjo Player*, etc., as advertised in your illustrated catalogue kindly sent me a few days since, and for which please accept thanks. I have read it through with great interest, but friends here and in Boston have prevailed on me to purchase a ———. The few days I have had it (the disease?) it has proved itself worthy of all ——— claim for it, and it is very satisfactory to me (glad to hear it). If I should, however, make any change (can you change a \$10 bill?) it will be for a Stewart. As I did not purchase your make, I cheerfully enclose stamps for catalogue sent."

COMMENT—We believe this correspondent to be a very dutiful young man—and a well-bred young man. But we fear he has indeed a long way to go before he will make a banjo-player. We might be so facetious as to call him "the young man prevailed on by his friends."

ANSWER TO INQUIRY ABOUT FRETS.

On long (or large size) banjos there is always more or less trouble with raised frets, unless they are strung with thicker strings than the shorter banjos—or else are tuned very high.

It is easily seen that a long string, vibrating more slowly than a shorter one, is much more apt to buzz, or jar upon the frets (generally upon the fret next to the one on which the string is stopped). Hence, we have always advocated the frets on smaller banjos only. For an experience of many years has shown us that frets on the banjos of large size are never entirely free from causing some annoyance. It is next to impossible to prevent the strings from buzzing on the first few frets of long banjos, if the banjo is played strong; for to raise the strings such a distance from these frets that this is possible, causes them to fall too far from the frets in the middle of the finger-board, and makes it difficult to finger; to say nothing of falseness liable to be caused by change in tension of strings, in pressing them down to the frets.

Again many performers pull the strings of the banjo upwards, causing them, if at all slack, to make a slapping noise against the fret coming next to the one at which the strings are stopped. Long strings, all things being equal, are more liable to do this than short ones.

Again there are few banjos made, of which the necks—and consequently the finger-boards—remain absolutely level, and perfectly true. It has been many times demonstrated that no wood in Christendom can be so prepared as to make it absolutely fire-proof, or water-proof. And for the majority of banjo necks to stand the handling of many players, they would have to be made not only fire-proof, but water-proof.

Banjos made with good finger-boards, with no fancy work therein, and without frets can readily be "trued up," should they require it at any time.

If all banjos were made of a "standard size" of say 10 inch rim and seventeen or 18 inch neck, and tuned in D and A, so that the strings would be short and tense, raised frets would be more appropriate and practical than they are to-day on so many larger banjos.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO-PLAYER.

(THIRD LETTER.)

BY A. BAUR.

I have often been asked, "What qualifications are necessary to become a banjo-teacher?" This is a question not easily answered; but to illustrate plainly what is necessary in a teacher and what is sometimes expected of a teacher who is right in the "whirl," I will give some of my experience, hoping that those who are ambitious of becoming teachers may be benefitted thereby.

Until the war broke out I had always lived in New York, where I enlisted in 1861. Having been severely wounded, I was sent from Chattanooga, Tenn., to the Central Park Hospital in New York, where I received my discharge in 1864, before my wounds had healed. Upon the advice of physicians I came to Western Pennsylvania, where the climate seemed to agree with me, but I did not mend as rapidly as I wished. Like all New Yorkers, I always thought there was no place on earth like that city, and out of it life was not worth living. In the meantime I kept writing and arranging banjo music, and practising diligently; some days playing as much as ten or twelve hours out of the twenty-four.

I made several visits to New York and found that the climate near the seashore did not agree with me, consequently I continued to live in Western Pennsylvania, continuing my practice and piling up music. In all this time I very seldom heard a banjo, except my own, played. In time, this sort of life became so monotonous as to be almost unbearable. In 1879, my health being fully restored, I determined to remove to New York and engage in business. It was not until 1880, though, that I was able to get away.

In May of that year I arrived in New York to become, as I thought, a permanent fixture there. It did not take me long to secure a home in one of the pleasantest suburbs, after which I engaged in the real estate business, intending to drop the banjo entirely, except as a source of amusement.

One day, not long after my arrival, I called at a music store where I was known, and almost the first question was "How long are you going to remain?" When I told them I had come "bag and baggage" and would remain there permanently, they said I was just the person they wanted to see; they were receiving applications daily for a banjo-teacher, and that I could make their place my headquarters; that I would soon be overrun with pupils, etc., etc. I told them I could not think of it, as I had already made arrangements to engage in other business. They would not have it that way, and wanted my address, which I gave them, never expecting to hear anything further from it, as I had so emphatically stated that I would not teach. In a few days, however, I had a note, in which they requested me to call at the store at once. I did so, and found they had secured three pupils for me. I declined to take them, but they insisted so strongly that I concluded to take those pupils, but no more. In a day or two they sent me several more whom I also declined to receive, but with the same result as the last—I took them. From that time on, during my four and a half years' residence there, I had more pupils than I could attend to. There was but one other banjo-teacher in the

city, and therefore no necessity for the cutting of prices. There were any number of "Simple Method" fakirs and several who pretended to teach by note. They could talk glibly about everything pertaining to music, such as major and minor chords in all the keys, the dominant and sub-dominant, etc., but when put to the test, were ignorant of even the simplest rudiments of music.

The prices then were:

\$40 for term of 20 half-hour lessons.

\$2.50 for lessons less than a term.

Strings 15 cents each.

No reduction for lessons missed by pupils.

The "Simple Method" teachers charged from 25 to 50 cents per lesson.

In all my experience I never had but one gentleman take lessons. Pupils were plentiful, and I preferred lady pupils because it is very seldom a lady does not know something about music. After the rudiments are mastered the rest is comparatively easy. When I had a pupil who knew the rudiments of music I considered her exceedingly dull if she did not play four or five little pieces after the fourth lesson.

I resided seven miles from the city, and to reach there in time for morning lessons I had to leave home on the 8 o'clock train, arriving in the city at about 8.45. This gave me ample time to reach the residence of any of my pupils at 9 o'clock. I generally found my pupils ready for work, and as I was always supplied with music for each one, but little time was lost in getting to work. From three to five lessons, and very often six or seven before lunch made the morning seem rather short.

The number of lessons depended very much on the proximity of residences of pupils. Nearly all my pupils lived on Madison and Fifth avenues, or on streets near these avenues. I never had less than two, and sometimes as high as eight pupils at one time at the Windsor Hotel, on Fifth avenue, and as many more at ladies' fashionable schools in the immediate vicinity of this hotel. This enabled me to give ten or eleven and sometimes as high as thirteen or fourteen lessons a day. This, however, only happened on days when I had a number of lessons to give at one place.

When it is taken into consideration that in addition to lessons I had to visit the music store at least once a day to inquire for orders or applications, and put in order some banjos, or have one or two sent to pupils desiring to purchase, also to look over stock to see if anything new in the musical line for arranging for banjo had been issued, I was getting through with an immense amount of work.

The life of a conscientious and pains-taking banjo-teacher is by no means an easy one. He cannot go to a music store and make a selection of one or two hundred pieces and distribute them among his pupils according to their capabilities as is done by most teachers of other instruments.

Banjo music is and was scarce at that time. Nineteen out of twenty banjo pupils will want to learn the popular melodies of the day, therefore it is necessary for the teacher to be thoroughly posted and a ready arranger, capable of adapting a melody to any form in which it may be needed—simplifying for one pupil and arranging it more difficult for another. Very often a pupil may have visited some place of amusement and has heard something played by the orchestra, or an instrumental or vocal solo and can remember only a bar or two; this is "hummed" to the teacher who makes a note of it, and on his next visit to the music stores he must find the piece and arrange it for his pupil, taking care to finger it correctly. Another source of vexation is when a pupil expresses a desire for a certain style of piece or

song, the teacher arranges it and on the next lesson day, the pupil having heard the teacher play the piece, says, "Oh! I don't like that piece at all." This is very annoying and apt to try the teacher's patience.

I always found it advisable to study the disposition of a pupil and arrange music that I thought suitable, increasing the degree of difficulty with each lesson; taking particular pains to see that the pupil learned each lesson thoroughly before getting a new one. I have had pupils to give me lists of fifteen to twenty pieces saying, "I want all those pieces right away." Had I gratified the wishes of all pupils I would never have been through writing music. I always considered myself the best judge as to what music they should have.

When my day's work of teaching was over, which was at about 6 o'clock, I was glad enough to leave the city and enjoy a half hour's rest on the cars, journeying homeward. I allowed myself one hour for dinner, after which I enjoyed an hour or two playing, or in conversation, until the family was ready to retire, when I got out my music paper, pen and ink, and laid in my stock of music for the next day—writing a simple jig for this one, an easy polka for that one, a catchy schottische for another, a set of variations for another, a set of exercises for another, and so on until I had a full stock of music for next day. This generally took me until 2 or 3, and very often as late as 4 o'clock in the morning. In addition to this, in 1882 I arranged and had published between the first of June and the middle of December over 500 pieces of music.

The banjo and banjo-music is still in its infancy, and both have a bright future. Every day is convincing more people that anything that can be played upon any treble instrument can also be played upon the banjo. The greatest drawback to the banjo in the past has been the scarcity of competent teachers and properly arranged music. But the time has come when the banjo is considered a musical instrument. The "Simplified Method" teachers (the "banjo's natural enemies") are dying off, or are being relegated to back seats; a new generation of players has stepped upon the stage. The latter have the benefit of scientifically constructed banjos and an abundant supply of music, from the simplest exercise to the most artistic and difficult solo with piano or full orchestral accompaniment.

Where we formerly had only a teacher or two in the large cities we can now count them by the hundred, and the supply is so abundant that almost every hamlet in the land can boast of its banjo-teacher—still there is room for more. Good, reliable, competent, and above all, sober banjo-teachers, are in demand. And the demand will increase as the banjo "keeps marching on." The banjo-teacher of the future will be as far ahead of the teacher of the present, as he of the present is ahead of the "plunkety plunker" of the past.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PRESIDENTS ON HORSEBACK.

"President Cleveland would hardly look well on horseback. He is too fat and heavy to sit a horse well. President Arthur during the latter part of his term, took horseback rides almost daily, and the presidents of the past have nearly all been fond of equestrian exercise. George Washington once flogged a stable boy because he did not rub his horse down when he brought him in wet with the exercise of a hard gallop. Jefferson was fond of horses, and he rode on a saddle to the inauguration. John Quincy Adams was residing near Washington when Jackson was inaugurated, and he used to walk

to the race-course to see the running. A tip which a man once gave Andrew Jackson on the race-course saved that man's life when Andrew Jackson became president; and Harrison pranced up to his inauguration at the Capitol on a milk-white steed, because he thought in this he was imitating the Roman Emperors as they rode along the Appian way. John Tyler had good horses, though he did ride in a second-hand carriage; and Zach Taylor looked his best when he was on horseback. Frank Pierce used to gallop about Washington at midnight on a spirited steed which was totally blind, and James Buchanan had a set of harness which cost him \$800. Lincoln liked horses, and he rode them, wearing at the time a tall silk hat, and no one thinks of Grant without associating him with his horses."—*Live Stock Commercial*.

OUR NEW BANJO BOOK.

JUST PUBLISHED.

S. S. Stewart's latest work on the Banjo; a book which *explains the Banjo*; is now ready, as per advertisement in another portion of this paper.

The book is set in bourgeois type, mainly, single leaded, thirty-five lines to the page, and is bound in flexible cloth covers, presenting a neat and attractive appearance.

The entire book contains 112 pages, and ten portraits. The number of words contained in the entire book throughout is about 30,000.

The work treats upon the banjo in such a way as to make it of interest alike to the beginner, the more advanced pupil, the teacher and the player. It also contains a complete defence of the banjo as a musical instrument, and will silence any objections put forth by musical bigots. In short, musicians are challenged to meet the arguments here presented, which are believed to be invincible. This is the first and only book which is a complete exponent of the banjo, and at the same time a teacher. It is the first and only work which is in itself a complete refutation of the charges of bigoted musical (?) minds.

No work of this character has ever been published; and this cannot fail to meet with the success it deserves. It has been placed at the low price of 50 cents per copy in order that a large edition might be sold.

A MANDOLIN PLAYER'S LUCK.

HOW AN ITINERANT ITALIAN MUSICIAN MARRIED A WEALTHY ENGLISH LADY.

London Letter in Irish Times.

"Among the marriages celebrated the week before last at a fashionable West-End Church, was one which was arrived at under specially interesting circumstances. The bride is a lady who inhabits one of the best houses, keeps her carriage and lives otherwise in a manner of a person of property and position. The bridegroom was, up to a short time before the nuptials,

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER.

(THIRD LETTER).

In a former letter I ventured the assertion that more negroes play the violin and guitar than the banjo, and the generally accepted notion that the banjo is a negro instrument is a mistake. The songs, "Oh, Susannah," "Old Folks at Home" and other old negro melodies in which reference is made to the banjo, and the fact that the instrument was always used by negro impersonators on the minstrel and variety stage, had a great deal to do with fostering the long ago exploded hallucination that the banjo was invented by the plantation negro of the south. I have often heard that Joe Sweeney, Tom Briggs, or some other old time banjo player had taken a trip through the south and spent some time there with no other object in view than to learn from the banjo playing darkies some of their quaint tunes.

For several reasons I never believed any of this trash: If Joe Sweeney, Tom Briggs, or any of the others were half as good performers as some people would have us believe, it is not likely that they could or would attempt to learn anything from a poor ignorant slave, who, at best, could afford nothing better in the shape of a banjo than a three or four string gourd or cheese-box, with strings put on at random and made out of a piece of rawhide, and in some instances waxed twine. I have seen boys tack a stick lengthwise on a cigar box, stretch strings across it and use it for a fiddle. As well might we prove this was the origin of the violin as to say that the plantation darkey with his gourd was the originator of the banjo.

From earliest childhood the banjo always had a certain fascination for me that I could not resist. Before the War of the Rebellion, my only opportunity for hearing the banjo was in New York City, but upon enlisting, early in 1861, I felt that at least one great wish of my life was about to be gratified, I should hear the banjo in all its glory, played by the people who had invented it and who were supposed to play it correctly. My regiment was sent to Fort Monroe, Newport News and points on the James River, in Virginia. Almost the first day after our arrival I began to look round for a real darkey banjo player. After hunting him for several months, I began to think that in that particular section of the south banjo players must be scarce. Some of the colored people had never heard a banjo played, others knew of a black man on a distant plantation who could play the "banjer right smart." I never succeeded in finding the player, although I made several long excursions into the country in the direction of the supposed contraband. I did, however, on several occasions, fail to make connection in slipping through the guard and was forced to spend some time in the guard-house, as a reward for my persistent efforts to find one of the original banjo players. I found plenty of negroes who played or attempted to play on the violin. Some who had, in some manner, come into possession of a guitar or dulcimer, but their playing was of the crudest kind. During a service of over three years, in six of the southern states, I found one banjo player at Annapolis, Md., one or two in Washington, D. C., one in Virginia and one or two in Tennessee. And of the number I found, there was not one who could play any kind of a tune through from beginning to end.

The late Mr. John H. Lee had about the same experience that I did. When he was treasurer of the Madison Square Theatre, in New York, I met him very often. He resided at the corner of Twenty-eighth Street and Fourth Avenue. I lived in Flushing, on Long Island. My route from the ferry to Pond's Music Store, where I called for orders every morning, was right past Mr. Lee's residence. On an average of about four times a week I either met him on his way to the theatre or I stopped at the theatre to see him. We usually spent a pleasant hour or two together and our topic generally turned on banjo music. Mr. Lee repeatedly told me he had been in every city or town of prominence in the south, and that in all his travels he never met a darkey banjo player who was worth listening to.

I first met Mr. Lee about thirteen or fourteen years ago. He was connected with a minstrel troupe that was billed in our town for Saturday night. The troupe stayed over Sunday and Lee and I spent the whole time looking over my collection of banjo

music, of which I had over two thousand pieces. At that time the rage for banjo playing had not yet started and of course there was not much demand for banjo music, and consequently but few pieces had been published. I had for a number of years been diligently engaged in arranging music for the banjo, with piano and also orchestra accompaniment. After playing the pieces until tired of them, I would lay them aside for future use, and as there was so little demand, my piles of manuscript grew rapidly. Even at that late date it was customary to charge from one dollar to five dollars for a piece of music. Twenty to twenty-five years ago I heard of several solos that were being played by certain soloists which I was anxious to hear played. As I could not go where the players were, I did the next best thing; I wrote to the authors for copies of their solos and played them myself. I remember having heard of a certain player who made a great hit playing the Bell Chimes Imitations. I wrote to him for a manuscript copy and paid him ten dollars for it. I paid the same price for the Imitation of a Hand Organ and five dollars for Home Sweet Home, with two variations. I have somewhere among my old correspondence, a list of pieces arranged for the banjo, with prices. These ranged from two to ten dollars each, and were considered cheap at that. If I can find this list I will give it to the readers of the *Journal* in a future letter.

But I am digressing!

That Sunday long ago:—Mr. Lee and I talked the banjo question over until we had it completely exhausted. During the day it was suggested by one of us, I do not remember whether Lee or I, that a combination of three or four banjos would be a new and novel act, and without doubt make a hit. Some months after this Mr. Lee was traveling with Haverly's first troupe and wrote to me that he thought if he had a piece arranged for a number of banjos, as suggested in our conversation, he could make use of it. I immediately arranged Vogeson March, by Zikoff, for six banjos, and as Mr. Lee had written to me that he might be able to muster twelve banjo players, I replied to him that if he wished to use the piece for twelve banjos, to double the parts. His acknowledgement of the receipt of the piece was dated at Raleigh, N. C., (I have it yet). He said that they had played part of the piece, but he had been obliged to teach it to his orchestra "by ear," and that he did not believe there could be found twelve banjo players in the United States who could play any piece of music on the banjo by note. After Mr. Lee became treasurer of the Madison Square theatre, in New York, he asked me if I remembered the letter he had written me from the south. The *Journal* readers can imagine the rapid strides the banjo had made in the few short years between the time he had his first banjo orchestra and when he was at the Madison Square Theatre, in 1884. In that year it was estimated by those who pretended to know, that in New York City alone there were thirty-five thousand banjo players, good, bad and indifferent. I don't know on what basis they made their calculations and I give the figures for what they are worth. Some made the number still higher.

I am positive that there must have been a great many players there, more than all the good teachers could attend to. I knew of only two teachers in the city at that time who taught by note correctly. The players came largely from that class of people who could afford to pay well for instruction on the fashionable and popular banjo. I had my hands so full that my health broke down in my efforts to do all I could. I worked day and night and then could not attend to one-fourth the pupils that I could have had. At this moment I recall one or two instances when I had to refuse to teach parties who were anxious to become experts on the banjo. The first was in a town near New York, on Long Island. Some of the young people had organized a banjo club. One of their number was appointed a committee of one to secure a competent teacher. He called at a prominent music store in New York and asked for a banjo teacher. My name was given him and he proceeded to hunt me up. I could not take them, my time was already more than taken up and I advised him to go to another music store. He did so and my name was given to him again. I had my name on the professional books of five music stores, and it happened that our man of the banjo club went

to each of these stores and at every one my name was given him. I afterwards learned from one of the parties interested that another committee was appointed in his place. This person met exactly the same experience. They probably came to the conclusion that I was the only available teacher to be had and called on me again and offered me the following terms: There were fifteen members in the club, who agreed if I would give them two lessons per week in class, each lesson to last two hours, thus making four hours altogether, each week, they would pay me fifteen dollars for each lesson, or thirty dollars per week for the four hours lessons. I was compelled to refuse this tempting offer on account of "previous engagements."

In another case the craze had struck a ladies boarding school in Connecticut. This school was very select and the principal thought that it would be a very easy matter to procure a teacher. The school was located about ten miles from Hartford, where there were at least two excellent teachers, but the young ladies preferred one from New York, and with a view to securing a teacher from that city, one of the young ladies was detailed to go down and arrange with a teacher to go to Hartford twice each week and drive from there ten miles to the school, and give twenty of the ladies lessons. The reader will at once see that this would be a stupendous undertaking. Allowing only thirty minutes to each lesson, as was my custom, it would have consumed ten hours in each day, without allowing for time on the road between Hartford and the school, or of meals. The traveling between Hartford and New York would all have to be done in the night time, before and after giving the lessons. Under the circumstances I declined the job.

On my calling at one of my regular stopping places one morning, I received an order to call immediately at a certain number in West Twenty-second Street. As I was told it was important that I should attend to the order at once, and having several pupils to attend to that morning, I hired a cab for which I paid two dollars and fifty cents. On reaching my destination I found that a lady from a boarding school, a short distance in the country, wanted a few banjo lessons. She was a visitor at the house where I had called, and the lady with whom she was staying had taken it upon herself to transact the business for the would-be pupil. Upon inquiry, I learned that the young lady wanted a lesson that morning, as she had only two days to stay in the city. She had no banjo with her and requested me to furnish one. I telephoned to my other pupils that I would postpone their lessons, hired another cab for two dollars and fifty cents and drove to Pond's music store, where I hired a banjo. I now began to count costs and found that I should be out of pocket if I was not more careful. I then looked round and found one of the cheap cabs at a dollar for the trip. When I reached the house of my pupil, her friend, one of the smart kind, who always know it all, began to question me as to prices, etc., for tuition. It was amusing to see her throw her hands up when I told her my price would be two dollars and fifty cents per half hour. She was not backward in telling me she would not stand by and see her protegee robbed. I was firm, and told her it had already cost me six dollars without counting rent for the banjo, but that it did not matter to me whether the young lady took a lesson or not, and started to go. This brought the madame to her senses and she agreed to allow the lessons to go on. I gave the lady two lessons of one and one-half hours each. Her bill for the two lessons, with strings and music I furnished, amounted to just twenty dollars. I thus got my cab fare back and made a tolerably fair profit. The "banjo world" is full of cranks—the worst kind of cranks. In my next letter I shall endeavor to show up a few of them.

A. BAUR.

THE BANJO TEACHER.

What a great pity it is that some enterprising and competent teacher of the banjo would not open a "banjo school" in Philadelphia, where pupils could receive the necessary instruction, and at fair prices.

To say that Philadelphia has no competent teachers of the banjo would be to say what is not true, but the fact remains, that up to the present time, none have displayed business tact and enterprise in the shape of

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(FOURTH LETTER.)

—BY A. BAUR.—

In my last letter I intimated that I might, in my next, have something to say about "cranks." Their name is Legion, and of the genus crank, the "banjo crank" is the worst of all. They are so hard to classify that I shall not attempt it, but merely cite a few instances when they have seemed conspicuous to me.

I once knew a man who, though a first class mechanic, with excellent judgment in all matters pertaining to machinery of intricate mechanism, always contended that he had never seen a properly constructed banjo. He proceeded to enlighten the world. He made special tools and machinery to turn out different parts of the banjo, according to his own ideas. He worked at it at odd times for over a year, and when finished, it was really a work of art—to look at. The brackets and hooks were sterling silver. The rim and neck were thickly inlaid with the same metal. The back had a device similar to the "Dobson Bell" banjo, but it was larger and covered the whole back of the banjo, and it tightened the head or loosened it with one turn of a screw.



The fifth string nut was at the tenth fret. The string was run over the nut and into a hole back of the nut, then through the neck to the peg head, where it was attached to the peg. The pegs all had slots instead of holes, and the strings could be snapped into place in an instant. The banjo was in the most elaborate morocco case I ever saw; in fact, the whole outfit was as fine a piece of workmanship as ever was made. It weighed between

FIFTY AND SIXTY POUNDS,

cost over two hundred and fifty dollars without the case, and when played upon could not be heard ten feet away. The man never made a second one.

Another, nearly equal to the above, is a crank who lives in Pittsburgh, Pa. This one poses as a maker of nothing but fine banjos, and he never saw a banjo that amounted to anything unless it had his improvements added to it. When I first went to Pittsburgh he was altering the "Bell Banjo." I soon convinced him that this was a factory made banjo, and he then began putting his work in on the Stewart and one or two other makes of banjos. His improvements consisted in taking the veneering off the fingerboard, removing the ornaments, and putting on a new ebony veneering. He would inlay two or three ivory dots at different positions, put on an ebony tail-piece, and call it the "Improved Stewart Banjo"; for this he charged from five to fifteen dollars, and gulled quite a number of people into believing he had really improved their banjos.

HE STILL LIVES,

but I fear his occupation is gone, although I have, in the past few years, read quite complimentary press notices regarding his skill as a maker of fine banjos. He never made but one banjo, and it was a failure.

I once met Wilson, the pawnbroker, at the corner of Delancy Street and the Bowery, New York. He and I were talking about factory-made banjos being sold in pawn shops as genuine Clarke or other banjos. He told me that the "patent banjo" craze struck him hard at one time. He had heard of Jerome May's patent banjo, and also, that Jerome, for some reason or other, was disposing of his entire stock of banjos. He investigated, and found that the May Banjo had a sort of tin attachment in front, which was

FULL OF HOLES, LIKE A CULLENDER

Mr. Wilson imagined that having so many holes in front it would let out more sound. He told me

that he actually bought nearly two wagon loads of the banjos, some of them finished and others not. He paid four hundred dollars for the lot and he never sold but two or three. He was cured of buying patent banjos.

This reminds me, many years ago, quite a rivalry existed between Frank Converse and Charley Dobson. Frank was, at the time, probably the most artistic banjoist in the world, and a thorough musician. He always aimed to produce a higher grade of music than people had been accustomed to hearing played upon the banjo. Among other pieces, he played the Anvil Chorus and made a hit. When Charley Dobson heard of this it "riled" him, and he immediately had himself photographed, standing with a banjo in position, and the following legend printed at the bottom of the picture: "Charles E. Dobson, the world renowned banjoist, as seen playing the Anvil Chorus."

BLESS YOUR SOUL

Charley never could play the Anvil Chorus—not that it is a difficult piece of music, but it is entirely out of his latitude. Charley and Henry C. Dobson were the originators of the "simple method," and in advocating it so strenuously, they dug their own graves.

Not so many years ago it was thought by many people impossible to play the banjo by note. This idea had such a firm hold on the majority of musicians, that when one was told that a certain man could play the banjo by note, he would laugh and look wise and say "impossible, the instrument is not made to be played by note." In my own experience, I had the pleasure once to convince one of these "doubting Thomases." A circus was billed for our town. The leader of the band was also the leader of the orchestra, and a good violinist. My office was located in the principal hotel of the place and where the band stopped. My office was just off the public sitting room, and I was engaged in arranging a little polka for the banjo. The leader happened to pass my door and look in. He saw I was writing a piece of music, and as was natural for a musician to do,

HE STOPPED AND WATCHED ME.

After a while he said, "what are you doing?" I replied, "arranging a piece of music for the banjo." He immediately said, "I'll bet my violin against five dollars you can't play it after it is finished." I at once took out five dollars and handed it to a friend who was standing near. The violinist, thinking he had a sure thing, handed over his violin and winked at some of his circus friends. I finished the piece while they waited, then picked up my banjo and played the piece through. Not a word was spoken. The violinist crammed his hat on the back of his head, stuffed his hands into his pockets almost to the elbows and walked away. I took the money and put the violin away and locked my office door and went to supper. Before time for the performance to begin I hunted up the violin player and took him to my office, and made him a present of the violin. I told him I had no use for it and would not give my banjo for a thousand such instruments. He thanked me and said the violin had cost him a great deal of money and was a fine one. That he never would have risked it on a bet had he not been positive that the banjo could not be played by note, but that from that time on he would take an interest in the banjo, and study its capabilities. I met him afterwards and have every reason to believe that he kept his word, for he was an enthusiast on the banjo and its music. Nearly all the old-time players who played "by ear" and the "simple method," teachers, were outspoken in their convictions that the banjo, to be properly played, must be "played by ear." Time and again have I had them tell me, when I have asked them to play for me, that they had certain pieces that they never played for any one, for fear that the listener would "pick up" the piece and claim it as his own. Imagine the tribulations of a "play by ear" crank of the past and dark age of the banjo. Charley Dobson told me several times, when he had rooms on Broadway, that he was afraid to play some of his best pieces. He imagined some one

MIGHT BE LISTENING

and would "catch on" to the piece. He was always very kind to me, and I have spent many pleasant moments listening to him; but it was very

amusing to me, when he would finish and say, "I am the only man in the world who can play that piece, or, 'I am king of them all.'" In those days kings, princes and champions of the banjo were numerous; so Charley dubbed himself "The Emperor of the Banjo." Joe M. Mortimer, of Philadelphia, styled himself the "Lion Banjoist," or, "Lion of the Banjo," while Frank Converse called himself "The Autocrat of the Banjo." To the rising generation of banjo players, all this may sound like idle talk, but it is nevertheless true.

One species of crank is the man who writes a letter, asking what size banjo he had better use, and if I would advise him to use a steel bridge instead of one made of wood. Another asks if a thick head or a thin one is best. Any number ask if you think wire strings would suit their line of business best.

I had a letter from a crank in St. Louis once. He said "I want you to write me a march that will take the town by storm. I want it for myself, and don't want any one else to have a copy but myself. I don't care how many runs and *thrills* and *tremolos* you put in it. You can make the runs from one end of the banjo to the other, up or down. 'I'm a dandy,' and can play anything you send me. Your money is ready whenever the march comes." After going into some minor details, as to the style and size of banjo he used, the letter ended by saying, "Send the march as quick as you can. You need not make it too difficult for a starter." He is still waiting for the march.

To the numberless letters I have received, inquiring about dampers, mutes or devices for increasing or decreasing the volume of sound or tone of a banjo, I will here reply: Leave your banjos as they are. Begin by getting a banjo from a first-class maker, add nothing to and take nothing from it. Rest assured that such men as Stewart and others, who are wide awake and up to the times, are watching for any improvement or addition that may become necessary for the advancement of the banjo. Should they see or hear of anything of real merit, they will not be slow to adopt it. Should you desire to practise without annoying your neighbor, take a piece of cigar box or other light wood, three inches long and two inches wide and round the corners; place it under the head and beneath the feet of the bridge; then take another piece of wood, wide enough to reach from the rod or stick that runs through the rim to the first piece that is held against the head. The second piece should be wide enough to hold the first piece firmly against the feet of the bridge. This makes an excellent mute, and does not injure the banjo with screws or fastenings that rattle or jingle and injure the tone of the instrument. I always found it beneficial in practising, for the reason that it stops vibration of the head and strings, and therefore requires more force from the fingers in producing the tones. This strengthens the fingers, and you will be surprised to see how much more easily you can play after having practised an hour or so with this simple contrivance, than you could before putting it in.

The meanest crank I can call to mind, is he who imagines that after devoting a lifetime to study and practice, the banjo teacher ought spend his remaining days in answering five dollars worth of questions for a two cent stamp. I have in mind one particular crank, who some months since wrote to me from Grant City, Mo. His letter covered four pages of paper. In it he made known the fact that he was a new beginner—had only been playing a few months. He wanted me to tell him what key he ought to tune his banjo in, but he gave no dimensions. He asked many questions, and wound up by asking me to send him a list of my favorite solos. He said nothing about purchasing, and I presume wanted the list merely to

GRATIFY HIS CURIOSITY

At the time I received this letter my wife was very ill, and I was so worried that nothing was further from my mind than banjos, and banjo music. My wife continued growing worse, and I had no thought except for her. In the course of time this fellow sent me a scurrilous and ungentlemanly postal card, berating me for not having answered his letter. After my poor wife's death, in looking over accumulated correspondence, I found this letter and postal card, which I had not read until then. I immediately returned him his two cent stamp, but am sorry to say I forgot to tell him

that with an outlay of a very small sum of money, he might have procured from Stewart, one of his numerous instruction books, that contained all the information he desired, in addition to which he would have a good collection of music and useful facts concerning the banjo, that he could not obtain by sending two cent stamps to a dozen banjo teachers in different parts of the country.

About as useless a crank as one meets with, is he who is continually telling you of some wonderful player he has heard, who can swing the banjo, throw it up, turn it over and "all the time keep the tune going." This is sheer nonsense, as the tunes played in juggling a banjo are invariably simple. Frank Converse has often told me a story of John M. Turner. Turner was practising swinging two banjos. He stood at one end of a room swinging the banjos, when all at once one of the banjos slipped from his hand and went through a mirror at the other end of the room. It cured Turner of trying that act, but he adopted another equally as bad, that of playing three banjos at one time. Happily the mania for "juggling" is passing away, and more attention is being paid to legitimate playing. The art of banjo playing has made such rapid strides, that he who lingers by the wayside, in the shade of the "simple method," will find himself woefully behind the age.

With the wonderful advancement in the construction of the banjo, and the endless supply of music published for the instrument, it behooves one to practise diligently in the legitimate way of playing and acquiring a thorough knowledge of music, both in theory and in practice, to keep in sight of the times.



W. R. Addison, guitar teacher, West Superior, Wis., writes:

"I prize your journal very much; indeed, I do not know what I would do, if anything should happen that I could not get it. It is undoubtedly the best publication that I ever came across in the interest of the banjo and guitar. I have already found a number of good compositions for the guitar in your journal. It keeps one posted on all the late music, also a great deal of valuable information, an advantage over all other publications. I shall endeavor to get you all the subscribers I can."

Senor Louis T. Romero, the guitar virtuoso, of Boston, Mass., has his studio at No. 24 Dartmouth Street. The Senor is known by lovers of the guitar, to be a perfect master of his instrument, and it would not be going too far, we think, to say that he is the first among all living guitarists.

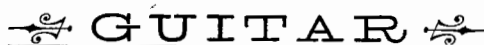
A new portrait of this artist, together with interesting matter concerning him, will appear in our next number.

E. H. Frey's guitar and mandolin music has become quite popular, and is making the composer's name widely known.

The guitar has taken a fresh start in life, and is more popular than ever, since the banjo club sprang into existence. The banjo and guitar make a splendid combination.

NEW MUSIC

FOR THE



IS BEING CONSTANTLY PUBLISHED IN

Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal



As a subscriber to the Journal, and in acknowledgment of the many benefits derived from its pages, I ask leave to make an "effort" to express some few "thoughts" concerning the banjo as a musical instrument and a means of enjoyable pastime. Like many others, I had for years only heard the banjo as played by the so called "plunkers", and, though somewhat of a musician, like many others of the calling, I failed to discover any of the powers or beauty of the instrument beyond what I then heard. An accidental opportunity came and I heard the instrument in the hands of a master. I was charmed beyond description, and realizing the vast amount of pleasure and convenience to be derived from so portable an instrument, (for therein lies one of its chief charms) I took it up,—I went in for the banjo—and shall always regard that "accidental opportunity" as a most critical event in my life's enjoyment.

My former musical knowledge, of course, proved of good service,—I had not to wade through the elementary studies of staves, bars, clefs, etc.,—still, I see no reason that the little knowledge requisite for the early efforts of banjo playing should offer any great obstacle to even an utter novice in the musical art.

I procured, in my enthusiasm, no less than six instruction books, each in its way presenting some little different feature, and no matter how slight the hint, I felt that it was worth the price of the book. Now heretofore my efforts on stringed or other instruments on which the notes had to be *formed*—as contrasting with the *formed* notes of the piano or organ—had not been very successful. Hence I had tried and given up the flute, clarinet and violin, so that my gratification was increased when I found that with the banjo I seemed to make more progress than I even had expected. Chords, positions, etc., assumed no serious difficulties. At this stage of self-tuition a friend steps in and gives me some few hints, and, though he plays extremely well, in fact, for regularity of time and expression I have never heard his playing surpassed, he had been self-taught. When he had given me all the instruction he could, he advised that I take a course under a regular teacher.

Herein I discovered my mistake. I should have gone to the teacher first, and afterwards have played with my friend. I should then have been able to judge of the merits of the points given me; as it was I found myself possessed of some bad features that took considerable patient practising to overcome. So, to those who are but beginners on the instrument, I give this advice; go to a good teacher at once. Whilst to those who are "self-taught" and are making good progress, if they want to see their faults and discover many easier and better methods of fingering, etc., do likewise,—go to a good teacher at once. Having secured a competent instructor, the next necessity is intelligent practice.

There are three things necessary to success in banjo playing—practice, practice, practice. And this can be multiplied "ad lib." till the fingering of the instrument becomes as second nature. In my own case I claim from thirty to forty hours practice each week. This for several months should show a result, or I should conclude that the student had missed his calling.

Then again, such compositions as are given by the intelligent teacher, usually have for their purpose many objects outside of its mere melody; chords, positions, slurs, hammers, diatonic and chromatic scales, harmonies and such like being but preparations for the greater facility of reading, which should be the ultimate aim of all players.

I cannot admit it possible for a musical reader, on any instrument, to perform in a "finished manner" any and all music that is placed before him. What reader of literature is perfectly familiar with, and can avoid the re-reading of every phrase presented to him? But the amount of amusement and gratifica-

tion to be derived from an evening's playing "at" new music, to me at least, holds pleasure beyond description.

While to those, who like myself are enthusiasts, these "thoughts" will present no new feature, I trust they may cause no displeasure. To the student plodding on in his early struggles, I hope they may contain some little encouragement. To those who have despised "untried" the instrument, may they "take it up" and, like myself, be convinced of its merits and beauties. Then will the "effort" have attained its purpose.

So, Mr. Editor, I have tried to show my appreciation by following the principles laid down in your valuable "Journal". It has helped me wonderfully, —to satisfy myself at least, as a player—and to sit down and read over your back numbers at all times gives me pleasure; while to the coming number I look forward with the anticipation of a child to the coming of its promised plaything—a plaything so valuable that it is stored up, and in after years so precious is it that it is turned to with all the reverence of an old friend.

"HYLERION."

THE BANJOIST'S DREAM.

BY C. S. PATTY.

"Old King Cole was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he;
And he called for his pipe,
And he called for his bowl,"
But not, "for his fiddlers three."
For "I'm tired of their twee-deedle-dee," said he.
"Now, I've got Weston and John H. Lee,
E. M. Hall and James Bohee;
For the banjo's all the rage you see,
And behind the times I will not be.
Perhaps you'd like to hear them play!
Yes, then I'll have them here straightway."
They entered with their banjos all—
The handsome Weston and the long limbed Hall,
Bohee, the pert, and the artist, Lee,
Modest, but full of dignity.
Hall led first, with his Home, Sweet Home—
We listened entranced, and the tears yet come
To our eyes, when we think of that magic trill,
Sweet and low as the murmuring rill,
Near the far-off home of the poet's dream—
The music was worthy of the theme.
Next, Weston's Jig, in a minor key,
That weird and wonderful melody
By the great artist himself, was played.
'Twas grand, and nothing could be said
When it was finished. By his art,
The dark man showed us that his heart
Was white as ours, and on his face
Genius shone through the mark of his race.
The four then played a grand quartette,
Arranged by Lee, from *Olivette*.
"That," said the King, "is the best of all;
But the solo playing of E. M. Hall
Attracts attention wherever he goes,
And every skilled musician knows,
That side by side with the violin
The Stewart banjo will soon be seen,
Weston's banjo is like a harp,
In tone so remarkably clear and sharp,
That its softest notes in the largest hall,
Can be clearly distinguished over all
The instruments in Callender's band."
"Yes," I replied, "it is certainly grand,
But ——— claims that he can beat ———."
Each artist bounded to his feet,
And raised his banjo o'er my head!
Thinking myself as good as dead,
I gave a loud and vigorous scream,
And woke to find it all a dream.

The above was written by C. S. Patty, and published in the *Journal* in 1882, and is now republished by request.

BANJO TEACHERS IN PHILA.

Thomas J. Armstrong . . . 418 North Sixth Street
George B. Ross . . . 1411 Chestnut Street
Miss E. E. Secor . . . 2104 Henrietta Street
Miss L. M. Coleman . . . 1019 Ogden Street
O. H. Albrecht . . . 241 North Eighth Street
D. C. Everest . . . 1416 Chestnut Street
Henry Meyers, (Banjo and Zither), 1416 Chestnut St.
G. F. Mayo . . . 222 North Tenth Street
Kirk Haddock . . . 2036 Woodstock Street
L. Martin . . . 1015 Arch Street

Dear *Journal*: The articles in No. 66 were very good. I wish the *Journal* could be published every month, I am confident that it will be after a while. I know that it requires a great many subscribers to pay for printing and issuing a paper. Mr. Stewart's ideas about keeping the *Journal* as an advertising medium for his business are very good, but I think if enough subscribers can be had to make it pay, Mr. Stewart can be induced to issue the *Journal* every month, and conduct it as a regular periodical publication strictly upon its own merits. I would like to say a few words while I am about it, to call the attention of beginners to the way some persons handle a fine banjo. Only a few days ago I purchased an elaborate banjo, and a friend of mine came into my parlor where the banjo was lying on the piano. He picked it up and began to try the tone of it. He could not play very much, but he fingered the rim all over, leaving the marks of his fingers thereon. I did not like to say anything, but I do wish that people would learn how to handle a banjo and not grab hold of it as though it was a crow-bar, snow shovel or a coal hod.

When some people go to wind up a watch or a clock, they go at it as though they were raking a fire, and a big fire too. Such persons never seem to be able to keep a watch or a clock that will keep correct time. They are too clumsy to have anything of the kind and should retire to the "good old times," when log cabins and hickory chairs were in fashion. The next time I see any one finger all over my banjo and take it up by clutching the rim, I intend to speak "right out."

J. B. W.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(SIXTH LETTER.)

—BY A. BAUR—

After an absence of over seven years, I recently paid a visit to New York City and found many changes there. I was surprised, however, upon visiting some of the music stores, that so little progress had been made towards keeping on hand a stock of new and good banjo music and banjos. In one instance upon inquiring for some late banjo music, the clerk handed me a folio of banjo music: upon looking the collection over I recognized the same folio, and with very few exceptions, the same pieces I had seen there nearly eight years ago. When inquiring why they did not stock up with new music, I was informed that there was so much music published for the banjo now that it would not pay a dealer to keep on hand a full stock, as the old pieces sold just as readily. He supposed, if they kept a collection of all the pieces now published, that when a customer asked for a certain piece that they did not have in stock they could easily persuade the person to take one of the pieces on hand. To my mind this is a bad case of short sightedness. I visited Pond's music store and in looking over their banjos, I discovered that they handled the Stewart, Morrison and Buckbee. I was told by the manager of the department that they sold the Morrison as their best banjo, the Buckbee for a cheap one and the Stewart as an intermediate grade. It made me smile to hear such an assertion from a man whom I knew had been in charge of the banjo department of this well-known house for nearly nine years.

I have known the Morrison and the Buckbee banjos for years, and how a music store can make any distinction between the two is (or was) a mystery to me. They are both factory made banjos. Buckbee has a large factory and supplies a great many of the music stores and dealers. He makes the different parts of

the banjos and puts them together in his factory. Morrison has the different parts of his banjos made at a factory and puts them together at his home, or place of business. Neither one of these banjos is at all comparable with the Stewart, in whose company they are placed. THE SECRET OF THE WHOLE MATTER IS, there is a much larger margin of profit in a factory made banjo than there is in one made by a maker who has a reputation for turning out first class work only. Music stores do not, as a general thing, sell a banjo on its merits, they nearly all depend entirely on its looks. Thus a dealer who gets his instruments from a factory will not hesitate to tell a customer that an inferior banjo weighted down with from 30 to 50, or even 60 brackets, is superior to an instrument guaranteed by a well-known maker, for no other reason than that he makes a better profit on the factory made banjo. The tone is seldom ever taken into consideration, that is "not in it."

There are many more banjo teachers in the city now than there were in 1884, when I left there. A few still teach the "simple method" humbug, others "by ear," but by far the largest number teach by regular musical notation.

I noticed in two of the music stores I visited, copies of "BRIGGS' BANJO INSTRUCTOR." This book has misled and discouraged many a beginner to such an extent, that it is not to be doubted that we would have many more performers on the banjo had it not been that they studied "Briggs' Instructor" and took it for granted that nothing could be gained from learning to play an instrument with such an uncertain future before it, as one would be led to believe it had after reading through "Briggs' Instructor." Frank Converse told me many years ago that he wrote this method. As it has grown gray in the service, I think Frank should use his influence with Messrs. Ditson & Co., of Boston to retire this work on a pension, or at least half pay.

The feeling among musicians is becoming daily more favorable to the banjo. During my trip I visited several large cities and met many musicians who only a few years ago spoke disparagingly of the banjo as being a musical instrument and asserting that it never would be. All of those I met had a good word for it, and one exceptionally fine musician said to me "the banjo is improving and coming very rapidly to the front as a musical instrument." "IT HAS WONDERFUL CAPABILITIES AND IS MAGNIFICENT WHEN WELL AND PROPERLY PLAYED." This acknowledgment and compliment from a trained and cultivated musician goes a great way toward establishing the standard of the banjo as a musical instrument. The same is applicable to any instrument. Unless "well and properly played," no musical instrument can be tolerated by a cultivated ear. No matter where you go, the feeling towards the banjo is improving, and only the ignorant and narrow minded will now say "there is no music in the banjo."

In my third letter I promised to give the readers of the *Journal* a copy of an "old time" price list of banjo music, if I could find it among my papers. Twenty two years ago I wrote Mr. Frank B. Converse, inquiring if he knew of any music being published for the banjo.

His reply is as follows:

New York, Nov. 30th, 1869

A. BAUR—Dear Sir:

"There is no published music for the banjo. I send you a catalogue of pieces and prices. The prices

may appear high, but the labor of writing and explaining them must be taken into consideration.

Sweet Home (variations).....	\$6.00
Last Rose of Summer (variations).....	5.00
Mocking Bird (variations).....	5.00
Yankee Doodle ".....	5.00
La Zingerilla Waltz.....	5.00
Witch Hazel Waltz, F. B. C.....	3.00
Hattie Polka, ".....	5.00
Dream Waltz, ".....	5.00
Hail Columbia.....	2.00
Marsellaise Hymn.....	2.00
Complete Jig, Set (Major and Minor).....	5.00
Clog, Hornpipes (each).....	1.00
Bell Chimes and Hand Organ (both).....	10.00

Orders of over twenty-five dollars, 20 per cent. deducted. Send money per money order letter to insure safety."

Truly yours, &c.,

FRANK B. CONVERSE.

Compare the above prices with those at which banjo music can be bought for to-day, and you will be better able to comprehend the strides that have been made in the matter of banjo music alone in the last twenty-two years.

These prices at that time were reasonable enough. I tried writing music and selling manuscript copies at one time. A year or two before sheet music for the banjo made its appearance, I issued quite a lengthy catalogue of pieces I had written and arranged. I averaged the price of the pieces at twenty-five cents per page of manuscript. I advertised my "wares" and in a short time had a large correspondence which kept increasing every day. In about six weeks from the time I began, I was completely "stalled." Orders rolled in, but at twenty-five cents per page I would be kept busy about eighteen hours out of the twenty-four and barely make living wages. After filling all orders on hand I gave it up, having concluded that it was utterly impossible to write music at twenty-five cents per page.

In the days before the appearance of sheet music for the banjo, the teacher had a hard time of it. All lessons and pieces had to be written out for the pupils, and a person who played the banjo by regular musical notation was a sort of curiosity. Long after sheet music began to be plenty, I wrote and arranged pieces for pupils, but when I got tired and wanted a rest I laid in a supply of printed pieces. In this manner I got a much needed rest.

If we, who played the banjo by note had a hard time of it, what must it have been for those who played "by ear?" Some "picked up" a piece very readily, while others had to drum away for months, and perhaps years before they learned a piece correctly. Horace Weston once told me that many a time he had followed a band nearly over the whole city before he could "catch on" to a tune. He had a wonderful ear though, and if he ever learned a piece he never forgot it. Ruby Brooks has told me that he generally had a piano player play over a piece time and again, and then it would sometimes be weeks before he would get it learned. LEW BRIMMER WAS CONSIDERED A VERY FINE PERFORMER in his day. If he were living to-day, he would hardly be considered a fifth rate player. He was devoted to his banjo. Day and night he would play on his "Old Cremona." The last time I saw him was at a place called "Harry's" on Broadway under the Theatre Comique; it was formerly Sandy Spencer's place, and a great resort for banjo players. I was at Lohr's on Grand Street one morning and

had quite a large roll of manuscript music with me. I had picked up a banjo and was trying over some of the pieces. While I was playing a man came into the store and purchased some strings from Mr. Lohr. After making his purchase he stopped and listened to my playing. After I finished he asked me if I would go around the corner with him and look at a banjo. I told him I was about to start up town to give some lessons. He insisted on my going and said it would take only a few minutes. I consented and we started, but I regreted having agreed to go, before we had gone two blocks. I thought we would never get there, as you may imagine for he took to Harry's which was a least three-quarters of a mile from Lohr's. After we got there I felt better, as I found there two Jimmy Clarke Banjos, with Lew Brimmer and a piano accompanist with him. As soon as I saw the crowd, I knew I was in for it." Lew was nearer "himself" that day than I had seen him in many a month. He was in a happy frame of mind and told me he had not "touched a drop" for months, and was getting ready to join a company then forming. The piano player was an excellent accompanist. Between he, Lew and myself we played and talked and talked and played until almost before I was aware of it, five hours had gone by and I had missed all my morning lessons with some for the afternoon thrown in. I never saw Lew Brimmer again. A short time afterwards he began going down hill. He never joined the troupe. Poor Lew was his own worst enemy, but not any more so than many another good hearted fellow who could not say *no*. I COULD NAME A DOZEN "OLD TIME" BANJO PLAYERS whose downfall and premature deaths are directly attributed to the same cause. I can name another dozen "old timers" who are eking out a miserable existence, who might to-day be in affluent circumstances if they had paid more attention to their pupils and not made so many visits to the bar-room. Their golden opportunity has passed and the rising generation of banjo players and teachers has taken their place. The rising young teacher should bear in mind that the patrons of the banjo to-day are from among those who move in the most refined and select circles of society, who would not for a moment tolerate the aroma of a grog shop in their presence. By catering to the tastes of the most enlightened people in his community and winning their approbation, he advances the banjo.

On my return trip from New York I MISSED CONNECTION, and had a "lay over" of three hours in Philadelphia. I took advantage of the time thus at my disposal, and visited the establishment of S. S. Stewart, at 221 and 223 Church Street. As I had not visited Mr. Stewart's place of business since before his removal from No. 412 North 8th Street, I was astonished at the magnitude of the place. I spent over two hours there and did not begin to see all the sights. The first floors of the two buildings are occupied as an office, which is neatly partitioned off by itself and is occupied by Mr. Stewart, Mr. Gorton and a young lady who manipulates the type-writer. Adjoining the office is a large room neatly shelved and supplied with patent port-folios for holding Mr. Stewart's numerous publications. The folios are all numbered and lettered to enable clerks to see at a glance where each piece of music is kept. Under this part of the establishment are Mr. Stewart's fire-proof vaults where music plates are stored. The adjoining building No. 221 is occupied on the first floor as a ware room, packing room and shipping room. The ware room with its many cases of elegantly finished instruments

took my eye, and here is where I spent most of the time I was in Mr. Stewart's establishment. After getting started there was no stopping; each particular banjo had to be looked over thoroughly, then tried and then receive a final examination. During my stay I looked at and tried the following banjos: Universal Favorite, one of Mr. Stewart's cheapest grades, although cheap in price, the finish and tone were excellent. The "Champion" comes next; it is a grade higher than the "Universal Favorite," the workmanship is better as also is the tone. The "Orchestra," as its name implies is mostly used in playing with orchestra. The finish is still better than those first mentioned. As to tone, all I have to say is, if you need a banjo to give general satisfaction the *Orchestra* will fill the bill. I also examined the "Thoroughbred," an elegant strong toned and reliable instrument, but the acme of perfection in my mind, were the "Presentation" banjos. I examined several different styles of these, any one of them would have suited me. All of them are WORKS OF ART IN EVERY SENSE of the word; the carving, inlaying, engraving and general get up are beyond the powers of a pen to describe. They must be seen to be appreciated. The tone of either of the higher grades of banjos is simply unsurpassable. Unfortunately for my own pleasure the ware room took up so much of my time, that I could not visit the upper stories of these two buildings. I was compelled to hurry off to catch my train. As I intended to return from Reading, Pa. and finish my visit to the shops and finishing rooms in the upper part of the buildings, I did not regret leaving that day, but was badly disappointed upon arriving at Reading to find that I must return home at once without being able to finish my visit to Philadelphia. However I promised my little boy that next summer we would go down and see more of it. He enjoyed the trip hugely, because Stewart gave him a gold lettered sign marked "Stewart's Banjos." This he displayed in every car that we occupied, until we reached Pittsburgh.

AN AMUSING FIZZLE.

Some of our readers will remember a sheet called the "*Elite Banjoist*," of which two numbers were issued from a Chicago office, located in a certain P. O. box in that city. It will doubtless be remembered that the editor started off with a great "flourish of trumpets," and apparently with a powerful lens in his mind's eye, which caused him to view his own importance at several hundred times its normal proportions, and to magnify his supposed abilities in proportion thereto.

The third number of the sheet failed to make its appearance, either on time or at any other time, showing that the public placed an entirely different valuation upon the publication than did the editor thereof.

Lately a note circular has come to hand, which is in itself quite a curiosity. It starts off thus:

"Mr. J. E. Henning having been engaged to edit the *Elite Banjoist* and for a consideration allowed the use of his name in the corporation known as the Henning Manufacturing Co., and as the *Elite Banjoist* has been suspended indefinitely, owing to the disagreement of directors and the consequent unavoidable litigation, Mr. Henning, while in no way responsible for this state of affairs, yet having induced many friends to subscribe for the paper, has generously agreed to credit each subscriber or advertiser with balance due him, which will be paid in sheet music from the J. E. Henning & Co. catalogue of new and

standard music for banjo, guitar and mandolin, at regular rates."

So Mr. Henning was engaged to edit the *Elite Banjoist*, was he? And allowed his name to be used for a consideration. Well, this is news indeed.

His stories do not seem to agree very well, for if we read correctly in his two issues of the aforesaid sheet, the corporation was not organized until after the appearance of No. one of the sheet in question. Now it appears that he wishes to make himself straight by passing the blame on to the shoulders of some other unknown parties. Yet he "generously" agrees to credit each subscriber and advertiser, and to pay him, not in money to be sure, but in paper, as will be seen by the present circular. Generous indeed, and kind to a fault. Such generosity is unequalled, except by his cheek.

Those who were foolish enough to pay for advertising and subscriptions in advance, will be compensated now by receiving the balance due them in "standard music" and at "regular prices."

The reason Mr. Henning's paper did not succeed was because of its utter lack of originality, its lack of principle and its general worthlessness. It started out with falsehood and deceit as its standard, and sank into oblivion, as such publications cannot fail to do.

After some rather extravagant language in which the late editor of the defunct "*Elite Banjoist*" puffs his music in the most egotistical manner, the circular in question winds up with the information that "Mr. Henning will soon issue a journal, which will be placed entirely under his personal supervision." This will be rather doleful news to "his friends" whom he induced to subscribe to the "*Elite*" sheet, and who scarcely require a similar infliction to convince them of the extreme shallowness of the would be editor.

The fact is that "Johnny" has been so long riding his rocking-horse in the nursery that he has fallen into the error of mistaking motion for progress. He started out with the idea that the entire "banjo world" would bow down before him and he met with humiliating failure and defeat, for which he has himself to thank, for misled by his very egotism, he reaped as he had sown.

RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Those whose subscriptions have expired or are about to expire, are sent notices on postal cards to that effect. When subscriptions have expired the names are taken off the list at once.

To renew yearly subscription be sure to enclose 50 CENTS by postal note, money order, or in U. S. postage stamps.

No subscription will be renewed with bill. Be sure to remit if you want the paper.

We do not open accounts on our books for 50 CENTS, and those who do not think enough of the *Journal* to send the 50 cents for annual subscription, are just as well off without the paper and the paper just as well off without them.

BACK NUMBERS.

We cannot undertake to furnish back numbers of the *Journal* as many of them are out of print. There is no use in sending orders in for No. 61, as that number has been out of print for some time. No. 65 we have at this writing a very few of, and after the few copies on hand have been sold, no more of that number can be had.

Our readers who foolishly mutilate or destroy their *Journals*, may find difficulty soon in securing any of the back numbers to complete files for binding.

Those poor croakers, who only a few years ago predicted the rage for banjo playing had reached its height and that the instrument would soon fade out of public sight, should again adjust their spectacles and view their short-sightedness. The banjo is getting more popular every year, and will continue to grow in popular favor as the instrument becomes better known and understood. True, it has many set-backs, which, however, in the long run, will only prove as aids to its progress, for often it happens that "pulling against the stream" for a season, develops the power necessary to make rapid advancement when we come to the smoother waters.

There are a great many horrible thumpers still left who profess to be exponents of the art of banjo playing. (Just as there are always *scrapers* and *raspers* on the fiddle, who make claim to the title of violinists.)

After hearing one of these thumpers attempt to play a banjo one often feels, for the time being, disgusted with the instrument, which disgust passes away upon hearing the instrument properly played.

Julian Hawthorne was right when he said the banjo was a fatal revealer of character.

How often have musically minded persons been surprised upon hearing a good banjo in the hands of a really good player, and declared their respect for the instrument from that moment established. They had not any regard for the banjo before, because they had never heard any music brought out of it.

Another draw-back is found in occasional cases in those misguided persons who are so constituted that they dislike to spend any money for strings or heads, and being afraid of breaking the head on their banjo, it is left soft and loose, and instead of the instrument being kept up to a proper musical pitch, the strings are kept loose and flabby, so that the banjo sounds more like a series of bull-frog croaks than music.

Another class of persons (they are few we are thankful to say), will use *wire* strings on the banjo, in order to save the trifling expense of a few good strings. Now it does not take long to establish the fact that wire strings are an absurdity on a banjo, and just as much out of place there as the finely spun gut string would be for the purpose of stringing a zither or piano.

This subject has been discussed in the book, "The Banjo," also in "The Banjo Philosophically," but it really requires very little philosophical discussion, for any one possessing an ear that is at all musical, would not tolerate wire strings on a banjo, and besides, they will soon cause more expense for repairs to the banjo than the cost of several bundles of good strings.

Persons who make use of such monstrosities on a banjo might as well "take a rest" at once, as they will never in this world become banjo players, not even respectable half-bred "plunkers."

Charles P. Spooner, Princeton College, N. J., writes:

"About a week before Christmas I telegraphed you from Hudson, Wis., for one of your \$50.00 Banjeaurines. It came O. K. and was simply 'out of sight.' I wish to thank you for your kindness in filling the order so promptly, at a time when your hands must have been full of business. The instrument was for my brother, I having bought one just like it from you, through a dealer, a short time ago. I would not exchange mine for any I ever saw. We have all kinds of banjos in the college, but the club uses your instruments almost exclusively. We strike fine single instruments of other makes, but for a surely reliable and perfect instrument every time, all the members of the Princeton Banjo Club will testify for S. S. S."

James Sanford, the veteran banjoist and comedian, died at Cohoes, New York, on December 23d last. Mr. Sanford, whose right name was Thomas Pynes, was associated with George Wilson for many years, under the firm name of Sanford & Wilson, comedians. He was one of the first banjoists to use and advocate the Stewart banjo, and was of a kindly and generous disposition, and made many friends. He served nearly three years in the army, from 1861, the breaking out of the war, and entered upon his professional career immediately after leaving the army, and continued in the minstrel and dramatic profession up to nearly the time of his decease.

The Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club announces its Fifth Annual "Mammoth Banjo Concert," at the Tremont Temple, Tuesday evening, February 9th. Mr. Lansing writes that this event will eclipse all previous concerts of the kind. The Imperial Quartette, of Boston, will appear, and a grand banjo orchestra of one hundred performers, under the direction of Mr. Lansing. The Crescent Ladies Banjo and Guitar Club, of Waltham, will also be a feature.

Mr. Lansing announces the sad news that Harry W. Harris died of consumption, in Denver, Colorado, on the 11th of January. Mr. Harris was twenty-nine years of age, and was born in Brattleboro, Vt. He was a fine performer on the mandolin and guitar, and his compositions for these instruments are widely known. He was a favorite with everyone, and was one of the original members and organizers of the Ideal Club, and in his forced retirement, through illness, two years ago, the club met with a serious loss. In his death the musical profession loses a valued member.

Geo. B. Ross, the well-known banjo and guitar teacher, while on a recent visit to New York, lost his valuable diamond stud, valued at \$600.00. Chas. F. Taylor, of No. 315 One Hundred and Thirty-Fourth Street, saw a man snatch the pin and told Mr. Ross of it. An officer was called, and seized the robbers, when one of them dropped the stud, which was picked up by Officer Smith. The prisoners gave their names as Frank Greeley, of Meriden, Conn., and Archibald Belmont, no residence. They were committed for examination and subsequently were convicted and sentenced.

D. C. Everest, violin and banjo soloist and teacher has been quite sick with "La Grippe," but is now attending to business again.

Those who desire instruction on either of these instruments should address him at 1128 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence L. Partee recently met with the loss of all their furniture, fixtures and instruments, valued at \$2,500. Insurance small.

Their studio was located in the Deardorff Building, Kansas City, Mo., and the fire occurred about 9 o'clock on the evening of Jan. 17th. Mr. Partee's present address is, care of Legg Bros., music dealers, Kansas City, Mo.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(SEVENTH LETTER.)

In a former letter I spoke of "elevating" the banjo. In expressing it in that way I did not intend to impress upon the reader that it was necessary to play a high or difficult grade of music. There is a far better way of elevating an instrument than to play difficult music on it. Take it into good company, and keep it there. The more refined and intellectual the company the better it will be, and the longer and firmer hold it will take. The advance of the banjo began when it was taken up by the ladies, and by them introduced into the home circle. Before that it was heard most frequently in bar-rooms and out of the way places, with an occasional glimpse of it on the minstrel stage, coupled with a grotesque impersonation of a plantation negro. In that age of the banjo it was never heard in the drawing room or around the fireside. I well remember the time when to be a banjo player was to be ridiculed by all of one's musical friends. I once belonged to a musical society; among the members were a number of very fine musicians, several of whom had received their musical educations abroad. Among the rules of the society was one which compelled a member to render either a vocal or instrumental solo, or take part in any musical performance that might be allotted to him or her, by a committee appointed for that purpose. I played the banjo in the orchestra, and as I played altogether by note, and played the parts given me by the leader, there could be no fault found with my part of the performance; but whenever I was down for a banjo solo I noticed a smile among the "upper crust," who always made remarks about my assurance in playing the banjo among musicians. I was importuned time and again by friends to drop

the banjo and learn some "musical instrument," such as the double bass or violoncello, or "anything except the banjo."

This continual coaxing and ridiculing of my favorite instrument only made me more stubborn and determined to overcome the prejudice that existed against it. I had played the banjo in an orchestra for over nine years and was convinced that my instrument would sooner or later assert itself, and assume its legitimate place among musical instruments. Long before I had ever heard of the banjo being played in combinations with other instruments, I had arranged piano and orchestra accompaniments to banjo solos, and made it a rule never to play without at least a piano accompaniment, and when the boom came it was like an avalanche, everybody wanted to learn.

I was in New York four years and a half and gave lessons to hundreds of pupils, most of them among the wealthiest and most fashionable families in the city. If I could possibly avoid it I never took any but lady pupils. I will give my reasons for doing so. It is very seldom that you find a lady who does not know something about musical notation, while there are very few gentlemen who know one note from another. Therefore, it was much easier to take a lady pupil who had already mastered all the rudiments of music than to take a gentleman who had never seen a note, but imagined he "knew it all." Almost any teacher will recognize him. Fortunately, I never had but one man take lessons from me while I was in New York, and he only took three lessons. After his third lesson I told him that he had better stop, that he was a credit neither to himself nor myself, and that to keep on would only be a waste of time and money. I had many lady pupils who were very apt and bright scholars. In fact, I never had a lady pupil who did not, after the eighth or ninth lesson, play from ten to fifteen tunes.

I often wonder if other banjo teachers have similar experiences to mine. I once had an order from a music store to call at a certain house in a fashionable part of the city. I called as soon as convenient and presented my card to the butler, who ushered me into the reception room and remarked that the lady of the house had been expecting me. In a few minutes a pleasant, motherly old lady came in, and in the course of our conversation she told me she was very anxious to have her daughter learn to play the banjo, but that the young lady was so bashful that she feared she never would learn. I told her I would make an attempt at any rate, and if suitable would begin at once. As I had a banjo with me and the young lady was at home, it was decided that I should give the first lesson then. The old lady went out and in a few minutes returned with as pretty a girl as I had ever seen. After an introduction I proceeded to business, and explained the manner of tuning, stringing, holding, fingering and picking the banjo. As she had her own banjo and followed me accurately in all my explanations, I discovered that she had studied music and would make an apt pupil. Before ending the lesson I gave her a little piece and told her I would give her two lessons each week until the season was over. I had talked myself nearly hoarse and gave her an extra long lesson, hoping to induce her to make some sort of a reply to my explanations. She never spoke a word and I took my departure, after having about made up my mind that she was a mute. I continued giving her lessons, and finished one term of twenty lessons without having succeeded in getting a word from her. After each lesson her mother would meet me on my way to the front door, and ask me how her daughter was getting along. She was an apt scholar and made very rapid progress, and I so reported to her mother. Before the first term was ended I had fully made up my mind that the young lady could not talk, and after becoming better acquainted with her mother I told her what I thought, but she assured me that such was not the case; that when with the family she could talk as well as any of them, but in the presence of strangers she seemed to lose her tongue. I gave her thirty lessons, or a term and a half. After that, twice I got the answer "yes," and once "no," to questions, and after giving her the fiftieth lesson, at the end of the season, when I had settled with her mother, the young lady said "good-bye." If any banjo teacher can equal this I will "give up." It is the strangest case I ever had.

In response to an order left at a music store I called at a house and was asked if I gave banjo lessons. After an affirmative answer I underwent quite a lengthy cross-examination, all of which was plain to me when they told me that two of the daughters had a year or so before that taken banjo lessons from Mr. —, naming a prominent old-time banjo player. They ceased taking lessons because the teacher often came to the house under the influence of liquor, and that the last time he called he was so much intoxicated that he became utterly helpless before he had been there many minutes, and had to be placed on a lounge and left there until he was able to walk.

Another instance, I gave lessons to the daughter of one of the most prominent capitalists in our country. She was out walking one day and saw a banjo all trimmed up with ribbons, in a case in front of a hallway leading to the rooms of another old time teacher. The lady told her father about it and also said she thought she would like to have an instrument like it. The next time I gave her a lesson she had the new banjo, and I saw at once that the most valuable thing about it was the ribbon. I convinced her that she had made a mistake. She saw it and said she would have her father exchange it. I told her I believed she would have to keep it, as the man her father bought it from made banjos to sell and not to exchange. On my next visit she asked me what objections there could be to the man from whom her father had purchased the banjo? That she had told her father that the banjo did not suit, and that she would go with him and select another. He replied, "why, my dear daughter, I would not let you go into that man's establishment for all the banjos in America." The above are facts and I can give the names of both parties, but refrain from doing so because the teacher in the first case died several years ago. The second one has about ruined himself with the "simple method" craze and can do no harm. I merely cite these cases to impress upon the reader the fact that these are not methods by which to elevate the banjo. An honest, sober, industrious and conscientious teacher is bound to succeed. After having located, let his actions be such as to win the respect and confidence of the community in which he has made his home, and I will guarantee there will be no such word as "fail."

I have always made it a rule never to play at a place where I could not take my wife. As far back as I can remember, since the banjo became popular, I never composed or arranged a piece or wrote an accompaniment that I did not give it to her for her judgment on it. If a banjo solo, I played it for her. If a piano accompaniment, I gave it to her to try over. If she said "I do not like it" I would throw it aside and never use it again. I have hundreds of pieces, cast aside because they did not meet with her approval. During my busiest times in New York I never gave a lesson in the evening unless it were at rare intervals and then only one lesson at home. We generally practised together when at home, and if I had an engagement to play at an entertainment or parlor concert I always made sure beforehand that she could attend and be with me. It may have been imagination on my part, but I always thought that by doing as I have stated people would take more notice of the banjo than when played alone. I always made it a point to play at any gathering where my wife could accompany me on the piano, and I am certain it brought me many pupils. I never charged for playing at entertainments, and made money by doing so. I always had plenty of invitations to play. After each performance I invariably had applications for lessons.

I came near losing my head once at a private entertainment. It was very amusing and happened in this wise: Near where we lived there was a large convent and school for young ladies. I was acquainted with the directress, who asked me if I would play for the school some evening. I told her I would be pleased to do so if my wife could accompany me on the piano. I also told her I would be ready at any time that she would give me a few days notice. In due time I was notified that they would have a "musical" on the following Thursday evening. On that evening we went to the convent and were shown into the parlor. One of the good sisters had a programme written out with blank spaces for my name. She asked me how many times I would

play. I replied that my services for that evening were at their command, and that I had come prepared to play as often as they wanted to hear me. She put me down for eight solos. I thought it was "crowding the mourners" a little, but said nothing. We were then ushered into the "music hall," which was very large and crowded. I paid no attention to the audience but took a seat and waited my turn, which was not long in coming. I went upon the platform or stage and looked the audience in the face. There was not a man in that whole sea of faces. There were over three hundred young ladies and sisters. I had never appeared before such an audience and it took a mighty effort on my part to keep off the stage fright which I felt coming on. I managed, however, to play my part through and received eight encores, which reassured me and there was no further trouble from nervousness that evening, although it was hard work, for I received from two to three encores for each number played. I felt fully repaid, because the audience had shown that they appreciated my efforts to entertain them.

On another occasion, after I had left New York, seeking for health, I stopped in Pittsburgh, and finding that the climate was agreeing with me and that I was regaining my health, I decided to locate there for a while at least. About two weeks after my arrival I was in a music store trying a banjo, and while thus engaged a lady came up and asked me if I ever gave banjo lessons. I replied that I had just come from New York where I had been engaged in teaching. She said that she wished to take lessons, and that if I would agree to do so I could begin at any time. I told her that my health was not very good and that I had decided not to teach while in Pittsburgh. She seemed so anxious to take lessons and coaxed so hard, that I at last agreed to take her as a pupil. I began work in a day or two, and after I had given her two lessons she asked me if I would come to her residence some evening and play for her husband, who was engaged in business in the city during the day, which prevented his hearing the banjo played when I gave lessons. I told her that if my wife could play my accompaniments I would be pleased to call at her residence and play for them. The next day she called on my wife and left an invitation for us to take dinner with them and spend the evening with them on a certain day that she named.

When the day came my wife and I went out and took dinner with them and had a very pleasant time. Shortly after dinner several persons came in, and as time went on more people arrived, until about eight o'clock there were between seventy-five and a hundred persons present and I had made up my mind that the small dinner party had resolved itself into a reception of no small order, and that we were to do the entertaining. I concluded to make the best of it and do what I could to satisfy the crowd. At about eight o'clock, when all the expected guests had assembled, we were asked to play. After we got started we were kept at it without a rest until nearly half past eleven o'clock. This occurred in the month of August, on a very warm evening. You can imagine my condition after playing for nearly three hours and half in a crowded room, on a close, sultry evening.

After that evening's experience I always fought shy of any invitations to dinner coupled with a request to bring my banjo with me. I had many applications though for lessons, from persons who were present and heard us play that evening, and also had numerous requests to play, but took care to have the parties desiring to hear the banjo played come to our rooms where we had a good piano and stacks of music, and above all, could stop playing when we got tired, without any danger of offending the host and hostess of the evening. A. BAUR.

"College Songs for the Guitar," is another book issued by the Oliver Ditson Co., Boston, Mass. This book contains many choice selections of the most popular college songs and well known ballads arranged for the Guitar. Price, paper cover, \$1.00, in cloth cover, \$1.50.

"The Vocal Guitar Album," also published by the Ditson Co., contains a fine collection of 42 songs, the accompaniments of which are not difficult. Price, in paper cover \$1.00, in board cover, \$1.25.



Senor Louis T. Romero desires us to state that he was not the original teacher of the Spanish Students, as might have been inferred from our statement in last number. He states that Mr. Granado was the original teacher of that organization.

E. H. Frey says that in tuning the sixth string of the Guitar to "G", as some of his pieces call for, it is not intended to have the instrument at "Concert pitch." His letter which is self-explanatory, is here given.

E. H. Frey to S. S. Stewart.

Yours of the 9th inst., to hand. In regard to tuning the 6th string of the Guitar to "G", would say that I never had any complaint. On the contrary, all the Guitar players I have met, rather, like the idea and take advantage of tuning the "E" string to "G," whenever the piece does not go below the lower "G."

I have been using the above method for more than five years, and very seldom break an "E" string. To prove the same, I have at present, a large "E" string on my Guitar, which I have played on every day, for nearly two years, and it is liable to last as long again.

In playing some selections on the Guitar, it is essential; just as much so, as tuning the Bass of Banjo to "B." I find the above method quite an advantage in teaching beginners, as it is easy, and I soon have them playing a Waltz, Scottische, etc., which naturally makes it more interesting at first.

I have had quite a number of pupils come to me from other teachers, saying that they could not learn under their instructions.

I admit that when the Guitar is tuned to Concert pitch, it will be too much of a strain on the "E" string to draw it up to "G"; however, I don't tune my Guitar away up to high pitch, and don't think it should be, for solo work. When it is necessary to play an accompaniment tuned to high pitch, a Capo d'astro will save a number of strings.

Generally those Guitar players who complain of breaking so many strings, do not know how to take care of their instruments.

When through playing, I always wipe my strings thoroughly with a piece of cloth or chamois.

"Instrumental Guitarist," is the name of a book published by Oliver Ditson Co., Boston, Mass. This work contains choice instrumental Guitar music, arranged in the best manner, by such well known guitarists as Louis T. Romero, G. W. Bemis and H. W. Harris. Price, in paper cover, \$1.00, in cloth, \$1.50. Address orders to The Oliver Ditson Co., 453 Washington Street, Boston, Mass. In writing please mention that you saw the notice in *Stewart's Journal*.

J. C. HAYNES & CO.'S GUITARS.

Correspondents frequently write us, asking if we manufacture Guitars as well as Banjos. We will therefore state that we do not manufacture Guitars, but give our undivided attention to the manufacture of Banjos, a complete catalogue and price-list of which may be had on application. Those who wish to purchase Guitars, are referred to J. C. Haynes & Co., Boston, Mass.

Messrs. Haynes & Co., manufacture a high grade Guitar, called the "Bay State" Guitar; and another style, known as "Haynes Excelsior." They also manufacture a cheaper Guitar which is known as the "Hub" Guitar. A catalogue and price-list of the different styles may be obtained by writing to Haynes & Co., for the same. Address J. C. Haynes & Co., 453 Washington Street, Boston, Mass., or the Philada. branch, Messrs. J. E. Ditson & Co., 1228 Chestnut St. In writing, please mention *Stewart's Journal*.

S. S. STEWART'S BANJO AND GUITAR JOURNAL

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SUBSCRIPTION, FIFTY CENTS A YEAR, WITH PREMIUM.
SINGLE COPY, TEN CENTS.

BEWARE OF FRAUDS.

A correspondent in New York City, writes:
"Different people have been telling me lately that they could buy banjos, marked 'Stewart Professional,' in stores in the Bowery and Chatham Street.

Teachers have told me that these banjos have been the means of their losing sales of your banjos."

Every good thing is imitated and scarcely an article of merit is manufactured that is not counterfeited.

There is no occasion for any one but a fool being humbugged by such clap-trap banjos as our correspondent writes about. Every Stewart Banjo is stamped with Stewart's registered trade-mark, as is fully made known in our illustrated catalogue. Every banjo also has its legitimate individual number stamped plainly upon it.

Thieves and pickpockets, like rot and vermin, always exist in certain places, and those who are ready to make a dollar without work, and by imposing upon the ignorant, are ever plying their trade as opportunity presents.

The public are again cautioned not to buy a banjo as a Stewart Banjo from an unreliable dealer without first getting its number and being sure that what is offered is genuine.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(EIGHTH LETTER).

—BY A. BAUR—

The Club, or more properly speaking, the Banjo Orchestra, is having a run at present, the like of which I have never seen. It often becomes the fashion or rage to do one thing or another, but the rage for banjo playing has never been equalled by anything in the musical line, and from all indications, it has come to stay. It is not merely a "passing thought." The more numerous and the more expert players become, the

firmer hold it will take, and the more decided will be the claims of the banjo to rank as a musical instrument. The Banjo Orchestra has done much towards pushing the banjo into popularity and establishing it on a firm basis in the minds of heretofore skeptical musical people. Two performers, taking it for granted that they have mastered the rudiments under a competent teacher, will make wonderful progress by constantly practicing together. One will assist the other, particularly in the matter of time and reading. When one practices entirely alone, it has a tendency to make him "drag" on the different passages. Two players of medium ability, by constantly practicing together will become expert players in a shorter length of time than if each were practicing by himself, and if there is anything better than two players to help each other improve in the matter of execution I should say it would be three or more players. I have had practical demonstrations of this fact in my past experience as a teacher. I have always made it a rule to give pupils instructions in transposition as soon as possible after they had mastered the rudiments and the scales, so as to enable them to take any song with piano accompaniment and to transpose the melody at sight. After a teacher gets a pupil to that stage when he or she can go into a parlor and play the melody of any song at sight by transposing it while some one plays the accompaniment on the piano forte as it is written, it is encouraging to the pupil and an inducement to try something more difficult.

Mr. T. J. Armstrong's able and well written letters on the "Banjo Orchestra" in recent numbers of the *Journal*, should be read and studied by all having a desire to become proficient in the art of arranging music for clubs and will do a power of good for one who may not care for anything better than solo playing.

Among the first banjo clubs I ever heard of was one about eleven years ago in a town on Long Island. It was composed of six eleven inch banjos, one bass banjo and piano to which was afterwards added a violoncello. At that time the very novelty of the thing made it a success, but compared with the present club it stood no comparison. All the banjos had a sort of dish pan attachment on the back. It was made of tin, considerably larger than the rim of the banjo and was supposed to catch the sound and throw

it out towards the audience. All the banjos were tuned in D, which taken in connection with the patent back made a very shrill and "tinny" sound. Being a new departure in banjo playing, it caught the popular ear and took like "wild fire" wherever heard.

Before the era of banjo clubs, trick playing was the rage. With very few exceptions the trick solo was adapted from a melody composed by the late Napoleon W. Gould, called "Sangalli Dance." I have an original copy of this piece somewhere among my collection of music. Gould was an old time teacher of the banjo and guitar, and told me not more than about fourteen years ago that he found it a difficult matter to make a living in New York City, teaching both these instruments. At that time there were not a dozen teachers in New York, now they number in the hundreds, and all of them, even the poorest, are making comfortable livings. Speaking of trick playing, there is no doubt that the day of the trick soloist has gone by. It used to be a common thing to be told that so and so was playing an engagement at a certain hall and that his playing was simply wonderful. He would throw the banjo all over the stage, and twist and turn it in every direction, all the time keeping the tune going." While living in Pittsburgh in 1884, I met a man who wanted me to hear him play. I went with him and I must say he was the most wonderful juggler I ever saw; his act would have done credit to a first class contortionist or india rubber man. I heard him frequently while he was in Pittsburgh, and tried to induce him to play some piece or pieces outside of his juggling act, but he assured me that he had never learned any other piece and I believe it, for I never heard him play any thing but the Sangalli Dance, which he did to perfection.

I notice in looking over catalogues of banjo music, that publishers and dealers are striving to make their collections of banjo music as large and attractive as possible, and all seem to be making an especial effort on club music. I fear though, it will be "many a day" before any of them can begin to show such a catalogue as Stewart has issued. A serious drawback to an inexperienced person who desires to order a selection of music from any one of the numerous catalogues published, is the fact that many of the publishers and dealers have not the remotest idea of the capabilities or even the

compass of the banjo. All they want is a collection of their own, and with this end in view they hire Tom, Dick, or Harry to arrange or write them some pieces. In their haste to take advantage of the increasing demand for banjo music, they never stop to inquire if the said Tom, Dick, or Harry have the ability to do the work required of them. In this way much useless trash is thrown on the market and called banjo music. Several years since quite a prominent music house hired a piano teacher to write them a banjo book. After it was finished I received a copy from the firm for inspection, with the request that I should give my opinion of the work. I will venture to say that any one who had never seen a musical instrument of any kind could have written as good a banjo book as that was. The head of the firm told me it was to take the town by storm. It would surely have done so had they thrown it on the market. I am sorry I did not keep the copy I had. I took it home and looked it over; I corrected the mistakes in a manner, but could not do it justice. There was not room enough on the margins of the pages to note all the mistakes. Such chords as C sharp on the 4th string at 4th fret, with E, A and C sharp, on 3d, 2d and 1st strings and 12th, 13th and 14th frets, respectively. I give this one chord as an illustration, and it was among the easy ones. When I showed the book to the proprietor he asked me if it would be necessary to correct all the mistakes, and if it would not answer to correct the most glaring ones. I replied that music written by incompetent persons had already done the banjo so much harm that it would take years to overcome. He then proposed that I should correct the book as he had suggested, and as they had had one hundred copies printed and bound, they would get out another edition and add to the title page—"Revised and Corrected by A. Baur"; for allowing them the use of my name they would pay me a bonus. I declined, emphatically, to have any thing to do with it, and left him. Some time afterwards I asked him what his firm had done about the book? He replied that the expense of getting out this first edition had been an item of expense that they did not care to lose, and the cost of correcting the plates would have been greater than to get out new plates; they therefore disposed of the copies they had on hand and abandoned the publication entirely, not having realized first cost from their venture.

At another time, on my way to give a lesson I met one of the earliest and most prominent advocates of the "Simple Method humbug." He said that he had been looking for me, and requested me to call at his "studio" at my earliest convenience. A short time after this meeting I went to his place of business and soon learned why he was so anxious to see me. After talking over some unimportant matters, he opened his desk and took therefrom a formidable pile of MSS. music, and gave it to me to look over. I soon discovered that it was a new banjo instructor that he intended to launch upon the broad waters of public

ignorance, as to the requirements of a banjo book. The title was, "Modern method for the Banjo," composed, arranged and compiled by The King of the Banjo.

I saw at a glance that the entire collection had been written by a professional music copyist, whom I judged to be a violinist, from the fact that there was not a chord from the beginning to the end of the collection. I made known to the "professor" my opinion as to who had written the music and he acknowledged that, being unable to write the music himself, he had hired a man to do it for him, but that *every note had been written under his own personal supervision and instruction*. I could not help but smile at the fellow's assurance, and asked him why I had been called in? He then told me that if I would arrange the sheets progressively, as they should appear in book form, he would pay me well for my labor, and knowing my weakness for a nice dog, he offered me as pretty a black and tan dog as I had ever seen, if I would straighten out and lay the different sheets in rotation as he desired, or as I thought best. The dog would have paid a hundred fold for any service I could have rendered in the matter, but in justice to myself and to those who in the future would be "gulled" into buying such trash, I declined and took my departure.

I cite these cases so that the reader may guard against expending money for worthless books. "It is not all gold that glitters," neither will the advertised title of a book assure the purchaser that the contents will suit his case, or is what he is seeking after. The country is full of unprincipled persons who are taking advantage of the demand for banjo music, and are having music arranged by those who do not understand their business, and scattering it broadcast over the land without any regard to its worth. These dealers have but one object in view. That is, to make money out of any one willing to invest it in banjo music. The innocent purchaser, if a beginner, does not discover his error until after it is too late. Teachers are, in a measure, to blame for this state of affairs. They are nearly always consulted by their pupils in the matter of purchasing music and should have stamina enough to tell the pupil what music to buy and what to leave alone. I never had and never would have the least hesitancy to throw aside a piece of music that a pupil laid before me if I thought the arrangement was faulty or tended in the remotest manner to retard the progress of the pupil. A teacher is always safe in telling his pupils to deal with a responsible house if the pupil is determined to select his or her own music. It is not to be presumed that because a firm publishes piano, violin, or other music extensively, that it would also take the same pains in publishing banjo music. To do so would require at least an expert in writing banjo music or to look over and correct such pieces as are offered to the firm for publication. From my own certain knowledge, this is done by but very few firms. In most cases when a piece of banjo music is offered, no matter by whom, it is given to

the musical critic of the firm for his judgment. If his verdict is favorable the piece is published. If not, it is handed back. Now, in nine cases out of ten, this critic tries the piece over on the piano forte. He may not even know the name of the strings on the banjo, but his judgment is accepted by the firm as final. The piece may have merit or may be the merest trash. In my opinion, and I imagine in that of any one, such a critic is not capable of judging on the merit of a piece of banjo music. The firm in whose employ he is, may be honest and aim to handle only the best grade of music, but is liable to get an inferior collection of music for the banjo. Having had ample experience and knowing the above to

(Continued on 3d Page of Cover.)

SHOULD THE BANJO BRIDGE BE KEPT STATIONARY?

Such queries are answered, under the old regime, "No;" under their present regime, "Yes." In other words, when the banjo was carried around in a cloth bag it was not safe to keep the bridge up when not in use, and the performer was therefore advised to remove the bridge when his instrument was not in use. But under the present order of things, when every performer keeps his instrument in a strong leather case, that is well lined, the protection afforded is adequate, and the bridge may be always kept in its place. It is an advantage also to keep the bridge in one stationary position, with the strings in their proper notches; for by so doing the bridge is more apt to hold its position in performing, and the notches do not so quickly wear out. With all the expenditure of gray matter of the brain on various clap trap inventions in the banjo line, it is somewhat remarkable that no aspiring inventive genius has thus far brought forward an invention for gluing the bridge down to its proper position on the head, so that it can not shift the thousandth part of an inch even when the strings are struck a sledge hammer like blow. Here is an idea for some fertile inventive mind. Bring on your patent glue.

"OBSERVATIONS ON THE BANJO."

In presenting so much of our new article, "Observations on the Banjo and Banjo Playing," to our readers in this number of the *Journal*, we may be permitted to state briefly our reasons for so doing. The work has been gotten up as an appendix to the **Complete American Banjo School**, a book that has been before the public for some years, and is a favorite among teachers and scholars alike. When the additions have been made to the book, all new purchasers of the work will have the "Observations," together with the other part of the work, bound in one book, and the price is to remain the same as before—no rise in price to take place. But a great many of our *Journal* subscribers have already got copies of the *American School*, and we do not mean that they shall pay any extra for the additions to the work, and, therefore concluded to present these additions in the *Journal*, so that all subscribers shall be in possession of them.

In order to give so large a portion of the "Observations" in one issue of the *Journal*, we have been compelled again to enlarge the paper, so that nothing else would have to be omitted, and we feel no hesitancy in saying that a more interesting and complete number than the present, No. 69, has never yet been produced. In fact we have a personal pride in pointing out the fact that the interesting matter contained in this number of the *Journal* has never been equalled for the money, and it is doubtful if much of the information herein given can be found elsewhere at any price whatever. We are pleased to give this matter to our subscribers, and trust that it will meet with as favorable a reception as previous efforts on our part have met with.

The cost of postage alone on this edition of the *Journal* is considerable, but is cheerfully borne by its publisher.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(NINTH LETTER)

In a former letter I mentioned "Briggs' Banjo Instructor," by Thomas F. Briggs, and as Mr. Stewart took occasion to refer to the same work in a former number of the *Journal*, I shall, in my recollections of banjo books and music, merely pay a passing tribute to this now obsolete "work of art," which is, however, still sold over the counters of scores of our music stores, as a "standard banjo instruction book." "Briggs' Banjo Instructor" was copyrighted and published in 1855, by Oliver Ditson, of Boston. I take it for granted that Briggs did not recognize guitar style of picking in playing the banjo. On page 8 of the book he says, "In playing, the thumb and first finger only of the right hand are used." He then goes on to explain the banjo style of playing, which is familiar to all students of the banjo. On the same page Briggs is made to say: "Owing to the peculiar construction of the banjo, the performer can play in two keys only, without changing its *pitch*; these two keys are the keys of the third string and fourth string." And on page 9 he says, "All banjo music is written in the keys of D and G, therefore when the performer wishes to play in any other keys, he has but to change the *pitch* of the strings and then play in the key of G or D, producing the *sounds* of whatever key he tunes to. In this manner, while it would seem to the performer that he was playing in the key of G or D, the tones he would produce might be in the key of A flat, or any other remote key he might tune to. It will thus be seen that the banjo can be played in any key." To the present generation of banjo players this is playing in *any* key with a vengeance, and the mere suggestion of such a scheme to a banjo player of the present day would no doubt make even a "Simple method" crank smile.

Again, on page 10, he says, "The greatest difficulty in playing is to stop the strings perfectly. In this the pupil must be guided almost entirely by his ear; he should, however, *generally* allow half the width of his finger, as space between each finger, and also keep the first finger about the same distance from the nut. In stopping the fourth string the first finger should be placed about a finger's width below the nut."

Imagine, if you can, learning to play an instrument by following such instructions as the above. On the same page occurs the following: "There are five principal movements or motions used in banjo music, and as these form the basis of all banjo pieces, the learner should become thoroughly familiar with them." And again: "When a single chord occurs, it is to be played by the first finger alone, which is done by sliding the finger rapidly over the strings, beginning with the lowest note. When two or more chords composed of the same letters occur, the first is made with the first finger, and the second is made by sliding the back of the nail of the thumb rapidly over the strings, commencing with the upper note of the chord." A pretty mess of it E. M. Hall, Huntley or any of our first-class performers would make if they attempted to confine themselves to the "five principal movements or motions" in any of their scientific solos played before an enlightened audience of the present day.

On page 10 is explained the second (and last according to Briggs) position. We are told here that "the first string is the only one ordinarily used in the second position." The highest note of which is G above the staff, or according to banjo music of the present day, it would be A on the first line above the staff. After these instructions come a number of pieces in the banjo style, at the end of which the learner is cautioned to frequently change the pitch, in order to obtain a pleasing variety in the sound. This is followed by a number of songs, at the beginning of which is the following: "The performer, in playing the accompaniments of the songs, can use either the banjo fingering, or snap the first, second and third strings with the first, second and third fingers of the right hand, as in playing the guitar." That "Briggs' Banjo Instructor" was the first banjo instruction book ever published no one will deny, but Tom Briggs never wrote it. This can easily be seen from the following extract from the "publisher's preface": "Shortly after the death of T. F. Briggs, the publisher was solicited by Mr. Briggs' friends to publish 'Briggs' Banjo Instructor.' As there had

never yet been published a complete method for this instrument, and as Mr. Briggs had acquired a great reputation as a performer upon the banjo, the publisher was induced to issue this work, and thus give the world a scientific and practical method for an instrument which has been ever considered a mystery unlearnable, and for which music had never before been written." That "Briggs' Banjo Instructor" was the first method ever published, there seems to be no doubt. That it was a crude affair all will admit, but that the banjo was advancing can plainly be proved by referring to the next book published. The title page reads as follows: "Howe's New American Banjo School, with new and complete rules and exercises, and all necessary instructions to perfect the player in the art of playing the banjo *without a master*, together with a large collection, etc. By Elias Howe. Published by Henry Tolman & Co. in 1857."

Mr. Howe then goes on with five pages of rudimentary instructions, after which he introduces his "Instructions for the Banjo" as follows: "The use of the banjo was until recently almost entirely confined to the negroes of the South and their imitators, the members of various negro minstrels. It was often made in a very rough and clumsy manner, totally devoid of scientific principles such as guide the makers of guitars and violins, to which class of instruments it belongs. But within a few years the improvements that have been made in their manufacture are truly wonderful; so instead of its being classed among the third and fourth rate instruments, it is now ranked in the first class, and is destined to perform a very important place, not only as an accompaniment to vocal music, but it will take a prominent position in the performance of instrumental music. The interest that it has excited in the musical world can readily be accounted for on listening to the sweet and beautiful tones it produces in the hand of a skillful performer." Mr. Howe's prediction of the future advancement of the banjo to the front rank as a musical instrument has been verified, but I fear his book had very little to do with the elevation of our favorite instrument. He does not give the slightest hint as to how to play or stop the strings, but says "music for the banjo should be in the keys of G, D and A major; but music in other keys can be played by changing the pitch of the instrument." After which he gives directions as to sitting in an easy, graceful position, an illustration of which is given, and is called, "correct position of the banjo while sitting." This, together with the information that "the banjo generally has five strings, although they are sometimes made with six, and even seven strings, yet five strings is the number in general use." The scale of, and how to tune the banjo in the keys of C and D, constitute the elementary principles of how to play the banjo according to Howe. These instructions are followed by a number of pieces from one of the author's violin books and some from a guitar book. The last part of the book is filled with songs and guitar accompaniments which were, however, taken from the guitar book.

After this "Howe's Instructor" several books were published, but they were generally copied after Briggs' Instructor. I had several, but they have been mislaid, so that at present I cannot give the authors' names. I find one published by William A. Pond & Co., New York, in 1864, called "Winner's New Primer for the Banjo." This, as far as the banjo instruction part is concerned, is almost a verbatim copy of Briggs' book, and contains the same stereotyped information: "Owing to the limited scale of the banjo, it can only be played (conveniently) in two keys, without changing the pitch of the strings, etc." It is, therefore, not necessary to enter into a detailed description of the book, as I have Briggs'. I would ask the reader, is it to be wondered at that the banjo did not advance more rapidly, or that musicians looked down upon an instrument that could be played only in two keys without changing the pitch of the strings? I do not blame them for having such a poor opinion of the banjo at that time. But things have changed. The banjo of to-day is, I am happy to say, not the banjo of thirty-five years ago. I would like to write more fully of that interesting period of the banjo, when it was just beginning to "see the light." When I began this letter I thought I had all the material at hand, but on looking over my collection, I found that I had packed nearly all my old banjo books in a box that I could not readily get at

without delaying this letter, and as our friend Stewart has admonished me that the printers are waiting for "copy," I shall have to depend upon my memory for data. I may make errors in dates, but do not think I am very far out of the way. After the Howe book there were a number published after the same general plan of Briggs'. Phil. Rice's method was published early in the '60's. It never had a very extensive sale. About 1863 James Buckley wrote "Buckley's New Method;" it was partially filled with violin tunes. About the same time Frank Converse wrote "The Banjo Without a Master," a small but very valuable book for the beginner, as it contained full instructions after each piece, how to stop the notes and which strings to sound. In 1865 "Converse's Complete Instructor" was published by S. T. Gordon & Co., of N. Y. This was the most complete banjo book that had been written up to that time, and had a large sale.

In 1867 James Buckley wrote a book similar in appearance to Converse's last book; it was published by Ditson & Co., of Boston. I remember the year of the publication of this book from the fact that I had been corresponding with Buckley who lived near Boston. His style of writing would have compared very favorably with Horace Greeley's. I never was able to read one of Buckley's letters through. I managed to decipher a word here and there, and in some way got it into my head that he was writing a banjo book. I wrote him a letter in which I told him to send me the next banjo book that was published. In the course of time it came to hand. On the day succeeding the one on which I got the book from the postoffice, a man was to be hung in our jail yard, and I had been included in the number of citizens who had been invited to witness the execution. I had received my mail late in the evening and, as you may imagine, the town was all excitement on account of the execution that was to take place the next day, consequently I only had time to look over the book at odd moments during the night. The next day, however, I slipped off by myself and was playing over the pieces, when I was informed that it was time for the execution. I dropped the banjo and rushed to the jail, reaching there in time to join the procession to the gallows. After the man had been pronounced dead by the attending physician and placed in his coffin, I went back to my banjo and the music. I relate the above circumstance, because I fix the date of the issuing of Buckley's last book at the same time this man was hanged, which was in 1867. I was intensely interested at that time in everything pertaining to the banjo, and what I say of myself was equally true of every banjo player of my acquaintance; we were all on the look-out for new music, and every fresh piece was eagerly sought after and greedily devoured. Some time after the Buckley book, Converse wrote his "Banjo and How to Play It," a small book like the "Banjo Without a Master." Most of us who were interested in the banjo had by this time made up our minds that it had come to stay, and it was only a question of time when it would rank with any known musical instrument. Musicians also began to inquire into its merits and possibilities, and every one who could do so went diligently to work arranging and writing music for the banjo. Every spare moment I had was devoted to making new arrangements for myself, or for those who were unable to do so themselves. My pile of manuscript was assuming huge proportions, but I confess that although I had no doubt as to the future of the banjo, I had misgivings, or rather a certain fear possessed me, that through the slurs and contempt shown the banjo by so-called musicians, something might intervene to impede its progress. Nevertheless, I kept at work, and now feel that all was not in vain. The banjo has risen above all its surroundings. Its rapid rise and advancement has been unprecedented. Those who a few years ago turned up their noses at the lowly banjo, would now willingly be considered its champions. But the capabilities of the banjo are still unknown to us. Future generations will develop them to such an extent that nothing will be impossible. I have always contended, and have never had cause to change my mind, that any piece of music written for any known treble instrument can be played upon the banjo. But to return to my subject. In 1869, Converse and Degroot issued a book in serial form. It was to be issued as a magazine, in numbers. I was a subscriber and have copies of the only

numbers ever issued. The subscription price was, I think, three dollars and fifty cents, but I have a faint recollection of sending five dollars for it. For some reason unknown to me the pamphlets stopped coming, until early in 1872 I received a copy of "The Banjoist," into which the magazine had been merged. I have my two copies yet, but unfortunately they are packed in the box previously mentioned, therefore I cannot from memory give as complete a description of this banjo book as I would wish. I forgot to mention that in 1865 Converse issued a small book in paper covers, called "Frank Converse's Old Cremona Songster," and was made up of, as the title page says, "Banjo songs, stump speeches, sentimental ballads, comic songs, comic quartettes, walk arounds, songs and dances, etc., etc., with music," but as they were only the words and music without accompaniment, it cannot properly be called a banjo book.

I should not consider my letter complete, were I to omit mentioning the most original banjo book of all. It is by John Magez, and contains twenty-two pages of instructions for banjo, guitar and violin. There is not a piece in it, but the entire contents consist of diagrams of the fingerboards of these three instruments. On the first page is an "introduction," and as it best explains itself, I give it entire:

"I do not intend to bore the public with a book that has a lot of tunes in it, and no explanations or method to learn them. In every book you pick up, you find about one tune in twenty that you learn. So in a book that contains one hundred tunes you learn about five. This work of mine is an explanation for all other books, and if you study it well you can play out of any and all books, except *simple method*, which is intended for pupils that are too 'dum' to learn any other way, or too lazy to study real music. If an instrument is worth learning, why not learn it right? By note is the true way."

This book is nothing if not original. I think the author made it, from foundation up. On page 17 he says, in his guitar instructions, "Diagrams Nos. 18, 19, 20 and 21, show C, G, D and A chords. Study the lines and dots a few moments and you will come out all right. Don't say H——! the first look; everything is done little by little." The wood cuts are real curiosities. In lettering the string at the different frets, the letters are in all sorts of positions, some straight, some upside down some backwards, others horizontal. Some of them as follows: A G C Q T F G W &c., I z f t s y w , &c., &c.

Along in the early '70's banjo music began to boom and make its appearance. I never let an opportunity slip to write music for the banjo. I had a perfect mania for trying to elevate the banjo, and devoted days and weeks to writing and arranging music for persons of whom I had never heard until they asked me for some banjo music. Only a few weeks ago a man came to me and asked me if I would give him banjo lessons, at the same time remarking that he had an instruction book. I told him to bring it to me and I would start him on the rudiments. When he brought it I was surprised to find that it contained about twenty of my arrangements that I had made nearly twenty-one years ago for a certain publisher who never even sent me a copy of the book he had published, for the work I had done. In fact, he never even acknowledged the receipt of the MSS. and, as I never heard from him, I always imagined that the music had been lost in transit. In the latter part of the '70's, banjo books began to come out so rapidly that I have not pretended to keep any account of them. I have not mentioned any of the "Simple Method" books that have been published, because I always have considered them a humbug and a hindrance to the advancement of the banjo.

I cannot refrain from relating a circumstance that transpired a year or two before the Centennial at Philadelphia. I one day received a letter from a man in Cleveland, Ohio, stating that he had been very ill, but thought his health was improving. He said that he was passionately fond of banjo music, had practised on the instrument a number of years and was considered quite an expert performer; but had great difficulty in procuring music on account of its scarcity and also because he did not possess the means with which to pay the prices that were then asked by arrangers for manuscript copies of pieces. He also told me that he played entirely by note and thought he could execute any piece of music I might send him. I immediately answered his letter and forwarded him a few arrangements of

catchy little pieces. He wrote me acknowledging receipt, and said he could execute the pieces sent him very easily. I sent him some more and continued doing so for several months, always receiving grateful acknowledgments, and a strict account of all the pieces I had sent him with promises to pay me as soon as he recovered. After a time his letters, ceased coming, and I imagined that he had recovered and forgotten all about me. I had nearly forgotten him, when one day I received a letter from an attendant at a hospital in Cleveland telling me that the man had been very low with consumption, but was then thought to be improving a little. He had requested the attendant to ask me to write about the banjo, and send him a piece of music. I did so, and in reply received quite a long letter from him, telling me how seriously ill he had been. He had not been able to use his banjo, but was then getting stronger and would be thankful for any music I might send him. His letters were so pitiful, and he seemed so anxious to get well enough to play his banjo again that I thoroughly sympathized with, and had become very much interested in him, and determined to send him such a collection of music as would bring joy to his heart. I started to work, and for nearly a week I devoted every spare moment I had to copying and arranging pieces for him. When completed I sent the collection to him. His reply to me was written partly by himself and partly by an attendant. After that he wrote me a number of letters, always telling me what pieces he had played last and how he had enjoyed it. In a few weeks I noticed that his writing was getting shaky, and sometimes almost illegible. His letters became less frequent and at last ceased entirely. I never heard from the hospital attendant, but in thinking over the past and recalling that episode in my career, I feel amply repaid for what little time I spent writing music for this, to me, unknown fellow being, if I was the means of making life's burdens less hard to bear in his last hours.

The subject matter of this letter may not be as interesting to some of my readers as it might be, but as I have written on nearly every other subject of interest to banjo players, I thought that banjo instruction books might not come amiss. I receive many letters from all parts of the United States and Canada and some from Europe, asking me as to the best plan of fitting one's self for teaching the banjo. I shall in my next letter give my experience as a teacher and how I made a success of it. A. BAUR.

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OUT OF PRINT

Nos. 61, 65 and 67 of the *Journal* are entirely out of print, and orders for those numbers cannot be filled. Some of the other late issues, too, we have very few of, and judging from the present demand for No. 69, that issue, too, will soon be out of print.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE JOURNAL

We have constant inquiry for back numbers of the *Journal*. A complete file, from the beginning can not be had, as many of the numbers are out of print.

We have now on hand a few copies of each of the following numbers, which can be had at 10 cents each, or we will send the entire thirty-five numbers by mail on receipt of \$2.00. The numbers now to be had are as follows:—June, 1885; August, '85; October, '85; December, '85; February, '86; April, '86; June, '86; August, '86; October, '86; December, '86; February, '87; April, '87; June, '87; August, '87; October, '87; December, '87; February, '88; April, '88; June, '88; August, '88; October, '88; December, '88; February, '89; April, '89; June, '89; August, '89; October, '89; February, '90; April, '90; June, '90; August, '90; October, '90; February, '91; April, '91; June, '91 and October, '91.

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REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(TENTH LETTER.)

"Many are called, but few are chosen." Thus it is with banjo teachers, or rather many of those who profess to be teachers. In the last month or two I have noticed advertisements in several of the New York Sunday papers: One of these notices I saw after the first of April; it ran something in this wise: "Performers wanted to join Dobson's great banjo orchestra of one hundred performers, on May 1st; a knowledge of the instrument not necessary, instruction free." In my opinion, a person about to take part in an orchestra of one hundred performers should have a pretty thorough knowledge of the instrument he or she is to play upon. A man who will deliberately insert an advertisement like the above in a public journal is either a knave, or he imagines that every man or woman he meets is a fool. Another notice informed the public that banjo lessons would be given



at summer prices. In my experience, a first-class teacher is worth as much in one season as he is in another. Still another informs the public that a "thorough knowledge of the instrument guaranteed in one course of twelve lessons." Such nonsense as I quote above only tends to stamp the advertiser as a humbug, and it is safe to say that none of them are capable of guiding a pupil through even so small a course as twelve lessons, and it is safer still to say that after such a course the pupil will be compelled to acknowledge that he or she knew less than at the beginning. The only way I can account for such inducements being held out, is that the advertisers know very little about the business they have engaged in, but imagine they "know it all," and for a small consideration they agree to part with their scanty knowledge.

Many people imagine that the life of a music teacher is an easy one. Let them try it. A teacher of the banjo

LABORS UNDER MANY DISADVANTAGES,

that teachers of other instruments never dream of. If in a new field he must overcome the prejudice that exists against the banjo. After that has been overcome he must convince the ignorant that the banjo is a musical instrument and can be played the same as any other instrument, by regular musical notation and not by "patent banjo notes." It is wonderful how ignorant people can be when they do not try to learn, or even seek to be enlightened. I am safe in saying that I have been asked hundreds of times by educated musicians, "what is banjo music like? 'Do you read it the same as we do ordinary piano or violin music?'" I was once at a parlor concert where were gathered many fine musicians. After having finished my solo with piano accompaniment, I was amused with the following from the artiste of the evening: "I have never seen any banjo music, would you care to let me look over your collection?" I handed her my folio, and after turning it over she looked up in surprise and remarked, "why, this is just like any other music, I thought you used

PATENT NOTES

on the banjo." I informed her that she evidently had heard of the "Simple Method" humbug. Several other musicians present had the same idea, and when they learned that the legitimate banjo player was not a

heathen they became very friendly to the banjo, and for some time after I had plenty of volunteers to play my accompaniments on the piano. The banjo was growing in popularity and they wanted to be in the swim; but, as I have before stated in these letters, I never allowed any one but my wife to play my accompaniments, I respectfully declined their assistance. The ignorance sometimes displayed by very wise people is, to say the least, quite amusing.

At another "gathering" of musical people I played a solo in the "banjo style," using a thimble. After I had finished, one of the wisacres, a lady, came up and said "I never knew before that you used an

'ARTIFICIAL NAIL'

to play the banjo with." The remark sounded so ridiculous that I did not care to answer, but remembering that I had a number of thimbles in my pocket, I slipped one on each of my fingers and replied: "Ordinarily I do not," but happening to have one on when I began playing, and not making the discovery before I began, I did not have time to remove it. "What you saw on my finger was one of a set of artificial finger nails that I had made to scratch my wife's back with." With her expression, "oh, how nice!" the subject was dropped and I thought nothing further of it until later in the evening a lady called me aside and asked me to show her "those things I scratched my wife's back with!" With a look of innocent surprise, she said, "isn't it lovely? How nice of you to be so thoughtful." By the time a third lady had asked me the same question, grave doubts began to crowd my mind as to the smartness of my remark, and my suspicions were verified later on, when my wife, poor innocent soul, who took everything seriously, and could not understand a joke, came to me with a look of horror on her face and told me that every lady in the room was talking about some patent device that I had to scratch her back with. A feeling of remorse seized me, but it was too late then to remedy matters and I assure you it took me much longer to straighten things out and everything running smoothly in its natural channel, than it did for me to give vent to what appeared to be a harmless joke.

* * * * *

When I began this letter it was with the intention of fulfilling a promise made in my last letter to give my experience as a teacher, so that readers of the *Journal* might profit by it. Thus far I have succeeded in keeping far from my track, but as there will be more *Journals* in the future, I shall endeavor to stick closer to my text, and what I cannot get into this letter may not come amiss in the next number. I take it for granted that the readers are not becoming bored with this series of reminiscences. I have received numbers of letters in which the writers express a wish that I shall continue the series, and the only obstacle to the consummation of these wishes is a fear that we may encroach too much on friend Stewart's valuable space and good nature. But to return to my subject, not every banjo player makes a good teacher, neither does it follow that a good teacher must necessarily be a good player; but of one fact there is not the least doubt, a teacher should never attempt to teach a pupil that which he does not thoroughly understand himself. Nothing will so quickly shake the confidence of a pupil in the teacher's ability as to have a question or lesson unsatisfactorily explained. I never in my experience found any two pupils alike. Some are very quick to learn and just as apt to forget, while others who are slow to comprehend, never forget what has once been taught them. A successful teacher should be full of expedients—quick to perceive and ready to supply the wants of any and all pupils. When the banjo rage first began, my greatest difficulty was in keeping pupils supplied with music. As the supply of published banjo music was not plentiful, I had to depend upon my stock of arrangements. Even this, large as it was, was inadequate to supply the de-

mand. At this time the light comic operas were all the rage, and as I always made it a point to give pupils the pieces they asked for, (if they were not too difficult), I was kept busy arranging the most popular melodies from *Patience*, *Pinafore*, *Merry War*, *The Mascot*, etc. Pupils seemed never to tire of them. One wanted this piece, another that, and still another something else. A few did not know what they did want or seem to care for what they got, and for these I generally arranged popular and catchy tunes—melodies from the late operas, songs, marches, schottisches, or anything that in my opinion would excite an interest in their studies. This latter class was easier to please than those who asked for certain pieces. Many a time I have taken the trouble to arrange a melody from some opera, only to be disappointed on taking it to the pupil on my next visit, to have them say, "Oh! I do not like that on the banjo at all, I thought it would sound better, etc." And many a time I have had a pupil hum over a few bars of a tune he or she had heard. I would then visit different music stores and find the piece, and then arrange it for the banjo. I always made it a rule to let a pupil have his or her choice of pieces, provided they were not too difficult and beyond the capacity of the pupil. In such cases I was firm and told them plainly that the piece requested would not suit. Another point I was very particular about, I never gave a pupil a piece that I could not first play over correctly myself. This happened very seldom, for the reason that I practised a great deal and arranged everything that came in sight, until I imagined I could play anything by note on the banjo that could be played on any treble instrument in existence.

It requires an immense amount of practice, however, to read music at sight, and as a banjo teacher ought to be fortified at all points, he cannot practise too much. A teacher ought also to be able to

TRANSPOSE AT SIGHT.

By doing so he will save much labor in trying over pieces written for other instruments. I have seen tolerably good readers who could not transpose a bar without first writing down every note. A man of this kind labors under a great disadvantage in the one item of lost time alone. I have often gone to houses where the pupil had a collection of piano songs or pieces. After getting through with the lesson I would ask if they had any preferences as to a piece for the next lesson. They would generally inform me that they had a certain piece or pieces that would be very acceptable if they could be played on the banjo. I would ask for the piano copies and play them over, at the same time transposing them into the most suitable keys for the banjo. In this way I saved myself much worry in selecting pieces for my pupils. I gave them their choice in the selection of pieces and they were generally pleased with them. If not, it was their own fault and not mine.

By careful handling a teacher can arrive at very satisfactory results in a short space of time. After one term of twenty lessons I nearly always managed to give a pupil a new piece at each lesson. If a difficult piece had been given that would take a month or two's practice—to enable that pupil to execute it—I was careful to give a lesson at each visit on this piece until it was thoroughly learned, and in addition to that I would have a catchy little jig, schottische, polka or something that would take up but a very short part of the lesson and give it to the pupil; thereby holding the pupil down to practice on the difficult piece and at the same time demonstrating the fact that he or she was making progress in the matter of the number of pieces learned. In the same manner, while I kept the pupil hard at work at practising scales and exercises, I sandwiched in a piece, either easy or difficult, as it suited the capability of the pupil, at each lesson; as the teacher ought to have the confidence of his pupils, it is absolutely necessary that he or she be an honest, upright and

capable person, with enough dignity to command respect from all with whom they may come in contact, either socially or otherwise. A person to be a successful banjo teacher, must possess the requisite qualifications, or he will be a dismal failure. A man may be ever so good a performer and have a thorough knowledge of his instrument, even to the minutest detail, and conduct himself properly to all outward appearances, but if he is of a surly, arbitrary and domineering or overbearing disposition, he will not be a success. In my experience with hundreds of pupils I never in one instance allowed my temper to become ruffled, or show that I was in the least discouraged because of the mistakes or dullness of a pupil. When I began teaching I made up my mind that in giving lessons I had a certain number of minutes allotted to each lesson and that it would be much easier to do it pleasantly, than to fly into a passion at the least mistake of a pupil. I have every reason to believe that my plan has worked successfully, and I pride myself on the consciousness that I have retained the good will of every pupil I ever had. When I began a lesson I made a business of the task in hand, and never "let up" until I was through. In only two instances have I stood upon my dignity, one a lady, the other a gentleman. In both cases I made up my mind that the parties were not sincere in their desire to become proficient in the art of banjo playing, and wanted merely to be able to play a chord or two and the same number of pieces. After I was thoroughly convinced in my own mind of this fact, I let them go in as near as I can recollect, the following words: "You are not a credit to yourself and never will be to me; your taking banjo lessons is a source of outlay from which you will never derive any benefit. We will therefore call this the last lesson." I never went to either place again and in due course of time sent in my bills, which were promptly paid. The lady is now a Countess in Europe, the gentleman a millionaire in New York.

"The laborer is worthy of his hire."

The amount charged by different teachers for banjo lessons is a matter of opinion to be decided by each individual for himself. "A may have agreed to fulfill a certain contract at five dollars per hour—B may be fully as capable as A, but he agrees to perform the same contract for half the price charged by A. This is B's business and not A's. As an illustration we will call A and B banjo teachers. In this case, B may have the most pupils but he is not making as much money as A. If he had twice as many pupils as A, he would not be taking in as much money, for the reason that B's customers belong to a class that cannot afford to pay as dearly for luxuries as A's customers. Therefore he is liable to have more customers who are unable to pay, and the chances are that at the end of the term he will have less money than A, besides having performed double the labor.

It is a curious fact, but nevertheless true, that banjo teachers lose less than any other class of teachers. My case may be an exceptional one, but from the beginning of my career as a banjo player to the present time, I never lost but one bill for banjo lessons, and that was only about four months ago.

In the East the banjo season generally opened about the last week in August or the first week in September, and closed between the 1st and 16th of July following. I made it a rule never to present a bill to any pupil continuing through the entire season, until it had closed. There were always enough short term patrons to pay running expenses between the opening and closing of the season. My terms were as follows:—Forty dollars for a term of twenty lessons, two lessons per week; two dollars and fifty cents per lesson for any number less than a term, and from five to ten dollars per lesson for special lessons. Lessons missed by pupils were their loss. Lessons missed by me were replaced. These were my invariable terms, from which I never deviated while in New York. The lessons were from thirty to forty-five minutes in length. After my health became poor and I was compelled to leave the climate on the sea-

coast, I went to Pittsburg where I had a room two days in each week. My prices to pupils who came to my room were one dollar per half hour lessons. Pupils who desired lessons at their residences were charged the same rates that I had charged in New York. I never paid any attention to what other teachers were doing. There may have been some who charged less than I did and had more pupils, but I do not see how they could have managed them. I was busy from morning until night and could have kept myself busy far into the night, but I declined to teach in the evening. I often heard that most of the teachers gave hour lessons; true, they gave them at their own rooms while I went to the residences of my pupils. But there were at least two days in each week during my entire stay in New York on which I gave lessons at a couple of young ladies schools. On these days I went to a room that had been set apart for my use, and every half hour a pupil would step in to take the place of the one with whom I was engaged. During a part of each season I had the above named school two days in each week and parts of two other days at another institution. I worked so hard during the busiest part of the season that I very seldom had time to take a mid-day lunch. After each hard day's work I would go home and after a seven o'clock dinner I would practise with piano accompaniment until half past ten or eleven o'clock, after which I would arrange pieces for pupils and get everything in shape for the next day. This usually kept me busy until two, three or four o'clock in the morning, after which I would take three or four hours sleep to be ready for another day's work.

It must be remembered at this time there was no immense

STEWART CATALOGUE

to select music from. At the present time there is no necessity for the teacher to wear himself out in writing music for his pupils. He need only consult a catalogue and choose music of any degree of difficulty from the simplest for the beginner, to the most difficult for the most advanced player. Some ignorant persons imagine that a teacher need not practise; a greater mistake was never made. The more proficient a person desires to become the more practice is required. I remember long ago, seeing an advertisement of Mr. Frank Converse, in which were the words, "Teachers Taught." A short time afterwards I met one of the most prominent and persistent advocates of the "simple method." He asked me if I had seen Converse's card. I told him that I had, and that I thought Mr. Converse capable of doing just as he said. He became very indignant and said, "why he pretends to teach teachers, don't you know you cannot teach a teacher, any man who thinks he can is a fool." These were as near as I can recollect his very words. I saw there was no use in wasting time on this ignorant and left him. He professed to be the "greatest and best banjo teacher in the world," and so advertised himself, although he did not know one note from another, and several years afterwards when he was about to take part in a

"BANJO PLAYING MATCH,"

he called upon me to coach him in the solos that he intended playing. I had taken his measure long before that, and was not surprised to find him entirely ignorant as to the manner in which he should make the simplest runs in the key of A major. His execution on the open strings and in the lower octaves seemed truly wonderful, but when he had a passage to play above the twelfth fret, he was altogether lost. After pointing out to him his most glaring faults and correcting them, I asked him if he had ever before heard of a "teacher teaching a teacher." He then told me that that was the first banjo lesson that he had ever taken. I remarked to him that my candid opinion was that a few more would do him no harm.

I find that the subject upon which I am writing cannot be exhausted in one letter, therefore I shall close this letter and continue upon the same subject in future letters, until I have it entirely finished.

A. BAUR.

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Banjourine, First and Second Banjo, Piccolo Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player

(ELEVENTH LETTER)

—BY A. BAUR—

A banjo teacher who has the welfare of the instrument at heart should be willing to impart his knowledge to others at what he would consider his services to be worth. There may be times when he may be obliged to do a great deal of work for nothing, but to a man who has a desire to assist in elevating the instrument, a gratuitous lesson now and then will be a source of pleasure and a relief from the monotony of always keeping in the same rut. "Variety is the spice of life." I have often met persons whose desire to learn to play upon the banjo was sincere. But they lacked the means to pay for instruction. In some instances they were supplied with ordinarily good banjos. In a few instances with very fine instruments, the presents of friends, but far more often they would have such instruments as their meagre purses afforded. When I found such persons sincere in their desire to learn the banjo, I took the utmost pains to assist them to the best of my ability. One instance is fresh in my mind. I was in a music store trying a banjo when a young man stepped up to me and inquired if my name was Baur, at the same time giving me his name. He told me that for several years the height of his ambition was to become a banjo teacher, but unfortunately he was entirely ignorant as to musical notation. This was not his worst trouble, however; his salary which was small was barely enough to support several members of his family who were dependent upon him for support. I replied to him that my time was entirely taken up during the day, but if he could come to my residence every evening immediately after tea, I would give him what time I could spare and see what could be done. As remuneration for my services, he could pay me when he became able. He came that same evening and I started him on the rudiments. I gave him a lesson nearly every evening (Sundays excepted) for a year. I then sent him pupils that I was too busy to take myself. By close attention to business and hard study he made rapid strides towards success. That young man has for at least six years been a successful banjo teacher, making more money in one month now than he formerly did at clerking in a year. In a short time after beginning to teach he was able to pay me for my work and has now a very snug bank account. Were I to mention his name he would be recognized by dozens of readers who have played his compositions for the banjo. I never in my life knew a banjo player or teacher to lose anything by being pleasant and willing to exchange ideas with others. As I have before stated, I have met so called champions who would not play for a person unless all doors were double locked and windows closed for fear some one would steal their pieces. If you ever meet a man of this kind set him down as an ignoramus, whose scanty knowledge is but skin deep and whose friendship is a drawback to any one desiring the advancement and healthy improvement of the banjo as a musical instrument. I have often found it beneficial

to change banjos; a person who plays continually upon one instrument often feels like having a change as it were. No matter how good an instrument you may have, if a change is made to an inferior instrument it will be an incentive to the player to take up the old one again and practice so much harder, and this reminds me that in 1880 I got a banjo from Stewart which I had in use several years, as it was a large instrument I played upon it more than any other that I had. After a time though, I became tired, the same tone seemed to grow monotonous. I had a smaller Stewart and took it up and began using it. The change was a relief, and whenever I took up the large one it seemed as if the tone was much sweeter than I had ever imagined it to be. While upon this subject I want to say, about a month ago I got a new banjo from Stewart a "Universal Favorite." It is the sweetest and at the same time the sharpest toned banjo I ever had the pleasure of owning. The workmanship is simply perfection itself. I could not state the exact number, but am safe in saying that I have in my time owned several hundred banjos; this last one beats them all. Fifteen minutes after I took it out of the box I would not have taken one hundred dollars for it. Now money could not buy it from me. I like it so well that it worries me to lay it aside at night. For several years I have used nothing else but the Stewart banjo (notwithstanding the fact that I am advertised by other makers as using their banjos), and sort of flattered myself that he never made as good a banjo as this last one and never will make another like it. I suppose he will though, he is always doing something to surprise his customers.

In a recent number of Kate Field's *Washington*, Anna L. Williams wrote an article on the "Origin of the Banjo." She is evidently very much taken with the modern banjo and writes her "Origin of the Banjo" entirely from hearsay. As a writer of fiction Anna may rank among the best, but as an authority on the banjo she don't amount to a "row of pins" or a "hill of beans." She begins her article by saying:

"Over half a century ago in the town of Banjoemas in the Dutch East Indies, near the coast of Java, a negro native of the place—with the love of music which his race universally possesses, desiring an instrument to accompany his voice, conceived the following: Taking a cheese box and crossing it with goat or sheep skin, he ran a handle through it, then using violin strings, which were tuned to the first, third, fifth and eighth notes of an octave, he gave it the name of "banjo," from the first two syllables in the name of his native town. No banjo of this time is known to be in existence, but from descriptions handed down they must have been very rude instruments."

These preliminary remarks are certainly enough to convince any old time banjo player who has watched the progress of the banjo, that the lady is mistaken and through ignorance has been led to write an article on a subject of which she has not the remotest idea. In the first place, the first two syllables of Banjoemas are not pronounced "Banjo," but Ban-yoo. The whole name being pronounced Ban-yoo-mas, the last syllable being properly spelled, maas. This town is a Dutch residency on the south-east

coast of Java. If the banjo was invented in the Island of Java, in the town of Banjoemas by a negro, why is it that it found its way to a far distant country like America and was never heard of in near by places until introduced by American banjo players? Another strong point against the name having been originated in the manner stated, is the fact that no one ever heard a southern negro call the instrument anything but a "banjer" as I have in former letters stated, I have been in many southern states and made it my business to look up "darkey" banjo players. In all my wanderings I always heard the word banjer and not banjo. As regards tuning, the first, third, fifth and eighth of an octave would indicate the third, second, first and fifth strings, leaving out the fourth or bass string. Years ago, say thirty or forty, I heard old banjo players say that the original or rather the banjos they first saw, had only four strings. Most of them remembered when the banjo had no short fifth or "Buzz" string, which was added about the time the banjo was first used by a troupe of negro impersonators, when that was is hard to tell. William Whitlock was one of the first, if not the very first banjo player of whom we have any account. Something over twenty-five years ago I saw one of his very first banjos. It had a fifth string. Whitlock began using the banjo in public between the years 1835 and 1839. The banjo I saw was one he had used in those years. It was a tack head and had a fifth string. I judge from this that it was long before Whitlock's time that the fifth string was put on the banjo. If the banjo had no fifth string as is stated in the "Origin of the Banjo," how could it have been tuned to the first, third, fifth and eighth of an octave? I leave it to my readers to solve the problem.

If we credit the southern negro with having invented or originated the banjo, why not make it plain. If I were to work out the riddle, I would do so in the following manner. On the Island of Borneo opposite the Island of Java, there is a mining, manufacturing and capital town located on the Banjer River and called Banjermassin. It could at least be maintained that the banjo was invented in this town because the negroes call it a "Banjer" and Webster says "Banjo," also Banjer, corrupted from Bandore, a three stringed instrument invented by Pan the God of Shepherds, guardian of bees and patron of fishing and fowling, half man and half beast. I suspect that Anna L. Williams chanced to to glance at an atlas and happened to see the name Banjoemas, jumped at the conclusion that the banjo must have originated there. We must admit that the origin of the banjo is vague, but that it is an ancient instrument, I have not the least doubt. I have seen illustrations of a number of ancient musical instruments which would not require much of a stretch of the imagination to take as a starting point for the modern banjo.

The "Origin of the Banjo" goes on to say:

"As the years passed improvements were made, but only in a slight degree. Throughout the southern

states banjos became as plentiful as pickanninies, and negroes could be found on any plantation who could make the banjo talk."

This is all bosh: If the banjo originated with the plantation darkey and they were such excellent performers, why do we not find at least some trace of them now? Any person who will take the trouble to inquire will find that there are from ten to twenty guitar players to every negro banjo player in the south, while the proportion of violin players is at least double that number.

In the "Origin of the Banjo," the writer speaks of a

Very skillful and artistic player named Sweeney as being the first banjo player to visit London. The Sweeney mentioned was Joe Sweeney, a banjoist of note of that day, but who, if living to-day, would not be considered even a mediocre player. I think its very doubtful if Sweeney visited London for the purpose of advertising himself as a banjo player; his forte was as a violin player and an all round performer on the minstrel stage. If Sweeney visited Europe at all in the early days of minstrelsy, he must have done so with George Christy's Minstrels, as that was the first troupe that ever visited England. During the war of rebellion Joe Sweeney was attached to the staff of General J. E. B. Stewart, the celebrated Confederate cavalry general, who, from all accounts, was a rollicking devil-may-care sort of fellow, who was very fond of the banjo. It is said of him that when in camp he sang to Sweeney's accompaniment on the banjo. Sweeney was generally known throughout the army of northern Virginia as "General Stewart's banjo player." Stewart was killed at the battle of Yellow Tavern, in Virginia, in May, 1864. Nothing is known of Sweeney's whereabouts from that time until the close of the war in April, 1865, but I have always understood that he died either a short time before, or after the close of the war. His home was on a farm adjoining that on which General Lee surrendered the Confederate Army to General Grant, in April, 1865. I met a man in 1883 who was born and grew up on a farm in close proximity to the one on which Sweeney lived. As I was very much interested in anything pertaining to the life of the one time great banjo player, I tried to learn all I could concerning his movements prior to his death, but was disappointed, for the reason that my informant could give me no information concerning Sweeney after the war began, except that he was a "right smart banjo player" before the war.

The writer of the "Origin of the Banjo" also says:

"Night after night London crowded the hall, and among them, Sir Robert Peel could be seen with stately head, gravely keeping time to songs which set the people wild. Mr. Greville has said that the airs became familiar in fashionable circles, and around many a piano were gathered sons and daughters of wealth, all joining in the strains of 'I'll Bet My Money on the Bob-tailed Nag.' The songs, however, were nothing compared to the banjoists. Mr. Pell, the original 'bones' was admired, but the banjo players were idolized. Men forgot the cares of business or state while listening to the tum-tum of the banjo."

According to this there must have been

more than one banjo player. The writer certainly shows a lack of information if nothing more. At that time such a thing as a banjo duet, or a combination of banjo with other instruments or even a banjo solo with accompaniments of any kind was never dreamed of. The orchestra leaders and accompanists of that time knew they could "vamp" along with the banjo, but never thought of doing so, and a combination of banjoists with any one troupe is an innovation of very recent years. I imagine that what set the English audiences to keeping time with the music, was the rendering of Stephen C. Foster's songs, such as "Swanee River," "Lucy Neal," "Old Kentucky Home," "Old Black Joe," and other songs of this popular writer, which were at that time filling the people's hearts.

Frank B. Converse visited England some time during the sixties and met with flattering success.

Charlie Dobson went there at a later period, and from all accounts, could not have been as successful. If I remember right, he and Levy, the cornetist, were billed to appear at the same theatre. Levy declined to play on the same stage where a banjo was tolerated, and made some slighting remark concerning our favorite instrument. This coming to the ears of Dobson, he assaulted Levy right on the stage, for which he was arrested. I cannot vouch for the truth of this, as it is only hearsay, but Charley Dobson has told me himself that he "plugged" Levy for making disparaging remarks about the banjo. "Origin of the Banjo" also says: "In a clever performer's hands, the banjo seems capable of doing everything: bells chime, waters ripple, winds blow, birds sing, and many other pleasant ideas are evoked; but it will never do for romance, its very name is against it; whether from association or not, we cannot connect romance and the banjo. The writer is evidently prejudiced against the instrument, and probably has never heard anything better than a 'plantation nigger' or a Simple Method crank try to 'juggle' the instrument. Certainly she cannot have listened to an artist rendering the same music upon the banjo that can be played upon any known treble instrument. A finished player upon the banjo can render the same music on his instrument and with as much feeling and expression as if it is played upon the violin, flute, clarinet, or any other instrument using the treble clef.

The writer of the article in question also informs her readers that

"The neck is now made with frets similar to the guitar, and the circular head is covered with a fine calfskin, which is tightly held by a large number of clamps with screws attached. These tighten the skin and assist in giving a more sonorous tone. Thus science has improved the rough tog instrument of more than half a century ago, until it is hardly inferior in style or tone to its near relative, the guitar."

I cannot for the life of me see what science has to do with "a large number of clamps with screws attached." Any ordinary factory workman can put on "clamps with screws" without number. The banjo that the writer of the "Origin of the Banjo" saw previous to writing the article, must

have been one of the thirty-eight or fifty-two bracket factory "tubs" that are being so extensively advertised, and whose only merit is the number of brackets they contain. All in all, the article is rather favorable to the banjo, but if Anna L. Williams is willing to be convinced that romance can be connected with the banjo, let her visit the ware-room of friend Stewart and look over the elegant sweet toned banjos she will there find. If she does not acknowledge that the tone of a good banjo is equal to that of any known musical instrument, I shall miss my guess greatly."

In conclusion she says:

"The prices are rather large for good banjos; I have seen one rated as high as one hundred and fifty dollars, though part of the price was due to the lavish use of pearl and silver in its decoration."

No doubt she would be surprised to hear that I have seen a banjo that cost eight hundred and fifty dollars, and there was not much ornamentation about it either. The brackets, hooks and nuts were of sterling silver, while the ornamentation was of eighteen karat gold, with which the rim and finger-board were elaborately inlaid. I have seen others ranging in price from one hundred to five hundred dollars, but I must say that nearly all of them were made by and for cranks, who had no more idea of how a good banjo should be constructed than most of us have of flying. As regards tone, nearly all of these very high priced instruments that I saw were dismal failures, and not to be compared with some ten dollar Stewart banjos that I have seen and heard. The only object the makers of these elaborate instruments seemed to be to make a very fine appearing instrument. In their efforts to attain success in the matter of making a costly instrument, they lost sight entirely of the more important essential, tone.

RACE BETWEEN BANJEAUURINE AND GUITAR.

Mr. C. S. Vail, Blockton, Ala., writes:—

"My little Banjeaurine still gives satisfaction. It has been tested by some expert violinists and they can say nothing against it. I played it Sunday with a concert size Guitar that was strung with all the wire possible to get on it, and you can bet I held my own, and when we had finished the man who played the Guitar was all tired out, and I laughed at him until he got mad; then I told him to get an instrument like mine and he would not have to work his liver out, and the boys all agreed with me."

It seems that the above was a race between the big brown mare, *Guitar*, and the little gray horse, *Banjeaurine*. It was "neck and neck" for a while, but at last the little gray horse came in ahead. It also appears that the jockey who rode the big brown mare was all "broke up" when the contest was over.

BANJO CLUBS

Be sure to read announcement of the Second Annual Prize Banjo and Guitar Concert, to be given at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, Pa., on Saturday Evening, January 14th, 1893.

This will be the finest Banjo Concert ever given in Philadelphia or any other city. Stewart and Armstrong, Managers. Tickets will be sold one month in advance.

inch neck banjo to an eighteen inch neck banjo, and performers should consider the matter well before doing so.

Let those who wish to tune in "D" use a small banjo—one adapted to the purpose—such as our "Specialty" banjo, which has a ten and one-half inch rim, and eighteen inch neck. Have such a banjo for the D pitch and a larger one for the C pitch, that is the only proper way to do.

All players must make their own experiences. After having "gone through the mill," and tried all the experiments, and arrived back near to the starting point, we will then be "ready for business."

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

(TWELFTH LETTER)

—BY A. BAUR.—

In the whirl and excitement of a busy life, incidents crowd so rapidly across one's vision that unless they are for some special reason indelibly stamped in a person's memory, they are forgotten, never to be recalled unless in indistinct recollections of bygone days. A few days ago I had reason to open my eyes in wonder at the contents of a box that I had not opened for years. In former letters I have said that years ago I arranged anything in the shape of music that I could get hold of. After playing the pieces until I began to tire of them, I laid them aside. In this manner my collection of music for the banjo accumulated very rapidly. I always had a mania for preserving music and as I tired of the pieces I put them into boxes, trunks, or anything that made a convenient receptacle. In 1880, when I decided to make New York and vicinity my place of residence, aside from my other belongings, I packed and took with me three immense boxes and one trunk, packed as full as they would hold, with music for almost every known musical instrument; keeping together as much as possible in the trunk that music which I had already arranged for the banjo and intending to arrange the remainder as often as an opportunity offered.

Of course, as many of my readers are aware dozens of new pieces are published every day by the different music publishing houses, and as I very seldom went home without from one to two or three dozen new pieces of music, the opportunity for arranging the music in my boxes never came, and when I left New York for Pittsburgh, in July 1884, my stock of music had been increased by one or two boxes. I took it all with me however, and after remaining in Pittsburgh a year, brought it with me here from where I had started five years before. I concluded though that I must dispose of some of it, or at the rate it was accumulating I should be compelled to keep an additional house in which to store my music. Acting upon this thought, I distributed about three thousand copies of all sorts of music to whoever cared to accept it. After doing so I still had left several boxes and the trunk full. This was about six years ago; since that time I have on a half dozen occasions given enough music to persons who could not afford the outlay, to last them through a

year or two's practice. In all this time there has been one box that for some reason or other had not been opened.

Last week I received a letter from a person who asked a question concerning a certain piece of music, which I knew to be among my collection. The answering of this question necessitated the going over nearly my entire collection to arrive at facts. In doing so I came across the long unopened box and determined to examine its contents. I found there, some of my earliest arrangements for the banjo. I can easily tell the date of any of my arrangements from the fact that it has always been a habit with me when arranging a piece of music for the banjo, to put the date upon which I finished the arrangement at the upper right hand corner of the piece. I found many dated in the sixties and none later than 1871. Among the rest I found a Medley on airs from *Il Trovatore*, dated in September 1867, and having an accompaniment for a full orchestra of twenty instruments. The Medley included "Fierce flames are raging," "Miserere," "Anvil Chorus," "Stride La Vampa" and a finale. There were also several Polkas, Galops, Shottisches and Waltzes with both Piano and Orchestral Accompaniments and Selections from "Moses in Egypt," and "Blue Bells of Scotland," the two latter with variations and arranged as duets for violin and banjo. Some of these pieces were dated in 1866 and others in 1867, 1868 and 1869.

When I saw them I at once remembered having arranged them as a surprise for some of my musical friends, and to show them the capabilities of the banjo when properly played by regular musical notation and in combination with other instruments. They ridiculed the idea of my attempting anything of the kind and I became so disgusted with the reception of my efforts to elevate the banjo, that I laid the pieces aside and forgot entirely having arranged them until they were resurrected a few days ago. The surprising part of it is that until well along in the "seventies," no one attempted to play the banjo in any way except as a solo instrument: Until then the banjo was always heard alone. About this time we occasionally heard some one playing the banjo with piano or orchestral accompaniment, but the instrument was still in its infancy and its wonderful capabilities unknown, therefore the few performers who played with an orchestral accompaniment were looked upon more as jugglers than men who had attained a scientific accomplishment which was to add to the list of recognized legitimate musical instruments, the banjo, of which every American born citizen should be proud, and to be the master of which even the most cultured musician should feel honored. It makes my chest swell with pride when I think that even my feeble efforts, may have had something to do with advancing to its present position, the only musical instrument that America receives the credit for having perfected.

A united and determined effort on the part of those interested, will in the next five or ten years advance the banjo farther towards perfection, than has been attained

in the past twenty-five years. I am constantly receiving letters from all parts of the country, asking for information concerning the banjo; some of them asking me to speak on certain subjects in my letters to the *Journal*, some asking my opinion as to what style of music the writers should play, while others name certain pieces that they already play, and asking me to name a course of exercises and pieces for them to follow, while not a few are ambitious to become teachers and ask my advice as to how to become proficient in the art of banjo playing, to such a degree that they may become teachers. Yesterday I received a letter from a young man who resides in Louisiana. He states that he has read my letters in the *Journal* and has gained a great deal of valuable information from them, and that he would like to have me answer in the *Journal*, if I considered the "The Pestalozzian Music Teacher" published by O. Ditson & Co., a good method to teach the banjo by.

For the benefit of this particular aspirant and many others who have written me concerning the requirements of one who is desirous of becoming a banjo teacher; I will say, I have never seen the work referred to, but to become a teacher of any instrument, it is necessary to study well the rudiments and theory of musical notation, which can be done from any of the numerous theoretical works published in almost every city in the United States and on sale in any music store. After having mastered the rudiments, if the student wishes to become a banjo teacher it will then become necessary to study some good instruction book for that instrument, which, in addition to that part pertaining to the banjo, contains also the rudiments and theory of music. As regards such a work I will here say, I know of no book better suited for the student, professional or teacher, than "*Stewart's American Banjo School*." It contains about all that any one would want to know concerning the banjo, and very many facts and studies that cannot be found in other books. There are other books by the same publisher, which may at the same time be studied to advantage, while if the study of the rudiments becomes monotonous the course may be varied by selecting pieces within the capabilities of the performer from the endless list comprised in Stewart's Catalogue.

After having mastered the rudiments, it is but a step to easy exercises and pieces, the constant practice of which will lead to more difficult pieces. To become a thorough and capable teacher requires hard work. After having attained sufficient skill to play ordinarily difficult pieces, the work resolves itself into a pleasure, and the student will keep adding to his "stock in trade" as he continues his practice. After becoming proficient enough in his musical studies to transpose at sight, he can play pieces which have been arranged for other instruments, and if they suit his fancy, he can arrange and lay them aside for future use. After becoming tired of his arrangements he can lay them aside, and after years have gone by (as was the case with me,) he can resurrect the old pieces, which will become an endless source of amusement to him. For months

at a time in the past two years, I have laid aside my banjo and not touched it only to try over a piece now and then, until I got the new "*Universal Favorite Banjo*," spoken of in my last letter, and when I opened the box of old music the other day, it was an additional incentive to me to "settle down" to practice again. I have played over all these arrangements of twenty to twenty-seven years ago, and although old, they were new to me, and "added fuel to the flame," and I am retouching one here, and another there, and rearranging others, altogether, so that by the time I have gone through the collection I shall have a large lot of new pieces, besides having fortified myself with renewed energy, I shall be ready to make an onslaught on any thing in the musical line that may offer itself.

An opportunity to hear something exceptionally fine will soon be presented to banjo players. I allude to the "Prize Banjo Concert" to take place at the "Academy of Music," in Philadelphia, Pa., on January 14, 1893, under the auspices of Messrs. Stewart and Armstrong. I have no doubt that attractions will be offered that will be well worth a trip of several hundred miles to see, and every banjo player, more particularly teachers, should avail themselves of the opportunity to hear the banjo orchestra of to-day, so that if they live to hear one ten or twelve years hence, they may be able to note the improvement in the banjo playing of the future over that of to-day. I am going, if I can possibly do so, and shall be terribly disappointed should anything occur to prevent my going. The first large banjo concert, or "tournament," it was then called—was given in Steinway Hall, N. Y., I think sometime in 1883. It was supposed to be a contest for prizes to be awarded to the best players: Horace Weston, Ruby Brooks, Charles E. Dobson, Ed. Dobson, of New York, Frank Ecland, of Boston, Jerome May, of Providence, R. I., and others were among the contestants. The matter had all been arranged beforehand. The valuable prizes were awarded to the originators of the affair, while several inferior banjos were awarded to the players, who in the opinion of the large audience should have been the successful competitors. I did not stay to see the end of the affair: It became so monotonous that I left long before the last performance. Some of the performers had an accompaniment upon a piano, while others played the banjo without any accompaniment.

The present combination of banjo club had not yet come into existence. The mandolin, now so effective in the club, was just being introduced, and at the time was an unknown quantity. Looked at from a musical standpoint, the Banjo Concert of 1883, was a very tame affair compared with that of 1893. As the Concert of January 14, 1893, will be a link between the past and the present, so it will be a link between the present and the future; and as the advancement of the banjo promises to be more rapid in the next ten years than it was in the last, every banjoist who can possibly do so, should be present, so that he can make a personal note of the progress made in the instrument

in the future. Not only for this reason alone should all banjo players attend. Many players will take part and as you very seldom find any two whose performances are alike, a person present and paying strict attention to the different styles of playing and execution, would learn more from one such a performance than he would in a dozen lessons from the same teacher; besides, the natural tendency of all manhood to excel in each particular line, stimulates an onlooker to renewed efforts to become proficient in what he has witnessed others successfully perform. I do not think, however, that it is necessary for me further to urge upon banjo players the importance of encouraging performances of the kind and magnitude of those given by Messrs. Stewart and Armstrong. They are bound to elevate and awaken an interest in the banjo, and the more enlightened and more refined the audience, the more it will help the instrument, while the benefit to the banjo player who attends is incalculable.

I shall be compelled to make my letter shorter than I intended, therefore shall be unable to speak of subjects I intended for this letter. Friend Stewart wrote me a few days ago that on account of advertising the Concert in the next Journal, he wished to begin work early so as to have it out long enough before the Concert for its many readers to hear of the good things to be offered as inducements for them to be present on that evening.

I have many misgivings that my letters are not as interesting as they might be, therefore will try to think of something new that may interest the readers of my next one.

The Stewart Banjo and its Imitators.

When any concern secures a musical instrument produced by another, and taking this instrument to pieces, weighs and measures the parts, and constructs a duplicate of the instrument—thus using it as a model—it is evident that the concern so doing looks upon the model as the STANDARD, and the *perfected article from which to copy*. Thus, when the musical instrument manufacturing house of Lyon & Healy of Chicago, took the Stewart Banjo apart, as recorded in our last number, weighed and measured the pieces, and went to expense to procure tools and machinery to make Banjos on the model of the Stewart, they at once acknowledged the Stewart Banjo a fitting model and worthy of their imitation. They acknowledge by their actions that the

"STEWART IS KING."

Were this not so, no sane man believes they would have used the Stewart Banjo as a model from which to copy.

Of course the Banjos made by this house are not STEWART BANJOS, any more than the cheap trade fiddles which bear a false Cremona label are Cremona Violins.

They did not succeed in procuring the STEWART TONE for their instruments—a fact that has been attested by eminent performers on the Banjo.

Why?

Simply because the work on the imitations

is done by hired workmen, who possess no knowledge whatever of the principles of making a good Banjo, and the mind that controls the work is governed only by mercenary motives, possessing no love for the instrument, and no knowledge of musical principles.

The evidence of this is borne out upon its face.

Did they understand the principles of Banjo making, would they dissect a Stewart Banjo, weigh and measure the parts and copy it?

No, certainly not!

Then it follows that as principles are not understood, even if a good Banjo is made once in awhile, by chance, the majority of the instruments so made will be below the standard.

Such attempts by large houses, governed by small souled men, to secure the business of another, will not always work successfully.

The Stewart Banjo has established a reputation superior to all others, and the manufacturer has shown himself to be a man who understands his business.

The firm mentioned, by their actions in attempting to copy the Stewart, have shown themselves, as Banjo makers, not a success, but merely second-rate copyists.

Before this or any other house can hope to absorb the Stewart Banjo business, it will be necessary to come up to the following:

First:—Produce a Banjo that is equal to the Stewart.

Second:—Convince the public that you have as good or better Banjo for less money than the Stewart.

Third:—Demonstrate the claims for your Banjos in books of practical information on the subject, making them as good as Stewart's.

To accomplish this it will be necessary:—

To find a man of intelligence, and one who possesses the requisite knowledge and experience, to superintend the Banjo manufacturing department.

When such a man is found, employ him if you can, at a salary that will admit of making and selling a good Banjo as cheap as Stewart's.

This is what Lyon & Healy will have to accomplish before they can hope to compete with S. S. STEWART in the making of

FINE BANJOS.

SILK COMPOSITION STRINGS FOR THE BANJO

The Celebrated Muller Twisted Silk Strings for the Banjo, Imported by

S. S. STEWART, 223 Church Street, Philad'a, Pa.

Orders filled by mail, at the following prices:

Single string, either 1st or 2d.....	\$.15
One dozen, 1st or 2d strings.....	1.50
Box of 30 strings.....	3.00
Third strings.....each,	.20

These strings can not be had at lower prices than the above.

We also have the smooth silk strings (not "twisted silk,") either *first*, *second* or *third*, at 10 cents each, or \$1.00 per dozen.

We can fill your order for either string you desire.

The Muller strings are put up, every string in a separate envelope, while the other silk strings are put up in bundles similar to the gut strings: Make no mistake.

REMINISCENSES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(THIRTEENTH LETTER.)

BY A. BAUR.

I have often been asked the question "How did you amuse yourselves in the army. Did you have any banjos or musical instruments there?" As a rule, the rank and file had all they could do in carrying necessary equipments such as gun, cartridge box, haversack and canteen; usually a piece of shelter tent, woolen and rubber blanket and knapsack, and very few men cared to load themselves down with musical instruments of any kind. The veteran usually, when on an active campaign and the weather was not too severe, threw away his knapsack and woolen blanket and carried an extra suit of under-clothing wrapped in his shelter tent or rubber blanket. Very frequently they did not carry the extra under-clothing. When it became necessary to change they would go to a creek, take off their clothing, wash it and sit on the bank of the stream or in the shade until the clothing dried. We did not, however, lose our love for music; and some of us would manage to have it at any price. After the war had been going on two or three years many luxuries that had been allowed in the early years of the war were from necessity taken from us—at first nearly every regiment had a wagon for each company but as we became inured to the hardships and ups and downs of campaign life the soldier learned to get along with less, so that in 1864 there were very few regiments in the service that had more than one wagon for the whole regiment, field and staff included. Strict orders were at all times issued that no baggage must be carried for an enlisted man in any of the wagons, while the amount carried for Commissioned Officers was cut down to the barest necessities. "Where there's a will, there's a way," and a few of us managed with the help of a friendly teamster to stow away a tack head banjo and an accordion with one or two of the reeds broken, (if the wagon trains managed to be up with the column when the troops went into camp at night and we were not too tired).

If the weather was pleasant a crowd would gather around the camp fire, the banjo and accordion having been "sneaked" out of the wagon and a door from some farm house or a couple of boards having been put on the ground on one side of the fire the audience would take its place on the opposite side, when the evening's entertainment would be gone through with. It consisted of songs with banjo and accordion accompaniment, stories of home, and jig dancing. The performances were crude but helped while away many a lonely hour and reminded us of home and friends in the far north. Owing to poor facilities for keeping the instruments in order, the instrumental part of our entertainments was always the poorest; sometimes it would be weeks before we could get a string and if the banjo head was broken it took much time and manœuvring for one of our party to steal into the tent of a drummer and punch a hole in the head of a drum near the shell after which we would watch that drummer's tent with eagle eyes until he took off the damaged head and threw it out, when "one of the gang" would pounce upon and bring it to camp in a round about way. Owing to their thickness the drum heads did not make very good banjo heads but they "beat nothing clear out of sight." In addition to the banjo and accordion we had a set of beef bones and a sheet iron mess pan answered for a tambourine. Taking into consideration our surroundings and the disadvantages under which we labored we had some tolerably good shows and at any rate satisfied our open air audiences, who by the way were as critical and as choicé as if they occupied private boxes in a cozy theatre and had paid a premium for choice seats. We always had plenty of volunteer vocalists, some exceedingly good ones. In a brigade of two or three thousand men it was not a hard matter to find quite a number of good voices. In fact, the best male quartette I ever heard was in the army; four men belonging to different regiments formed themselves into a vocal quartette and when they were all off duty they would visit the different regiments and render selections that would have done credit to the best quartette that was ever heard in public.

After our army got well on its way to Atlanta the campaign became so warm and the fighting so furious and incessant that we finally lost all trace of our

banjo and accordion. I remember that at the battle of Dallas or New Hope, Church, Ga., on May 25th, 1864, our friendly teamster was captured and we never heard of him again. The fighting continued without cessation every day until the 27th of June, 1864, when I was wounded and sent to Chattanooga. While at the latter place in hospital I heard that a very good troupe was giving nightly variety performances to immense crowds. For want of a better place the show was given in a tent. After the tent became so full that no more could be admitted a large crowd would congregate on the outside and listen to the performance, apparently taking as much interest, and certainly applauding as loudly as the fortunate ones who had succeeded in gaining admission. One of the main features of that show was its banjo player, who since the war has extensively advertised himself as one of the champions. Judging from his success as a "simple method" advocate since then I should say his performance on the banjo in the tent during the war could not have been such as would "set the world afire."

Speaking of our army orchestra reminds me of an amateur minstrel troupe that I helped to organize and belonged to when I was a boy long before the war. It consisted of a violin, flute, accordion, banjo, bones, tambourine and interlocutor. I was the business manager and we met and played at any house to which we had received an invitation. We met with varied success and in our primitive way did as well as could be expected. We were in existence about a year and rendered all the popular music of the day such as "Old Dog Tray," "Ke-mo-Ki-mo," "Camp-town Races," "Wait for the Wagon," etc., about as well as boys of our age could render it. I was "Tambo" and can assure you did all in my power to keep up the racket and like all boys was given to practical joking. I had worked off a joke on a man who swore vengeance if he ever caught me and I took good care that he should never have an opportunity to do so if I could prevent it. I was on excellent terms with his family and visited there in the evening, knowing that I could do so because he had charge of one of the fire bell towers in New York and went on duty in the afternoon and remained on until midnight or later. Several members of his family had heard us and insisted that the New York Minstrels (as we called ourselves) should meet at their house. As business manager the negotiations came through me and I agreed that we would meet on a certain evening when they could invite any friends they might want present. On the appointed evening the troupe was on hand, a large company had been invited and the affair promised to be a success and add more laurels to the rapidly accumulating honors that were being forced upon us. The family sitting room was selected in which to give the performance. I had misgivings although I knew the man of the house would not return until we should be gone, but as a "wise general chooses his ground beforehand," I arranged the semi circle so that my seat was near a door that led into the back yard. The evening was warm and doors and windows were open. Our performance always consisted of a regular minstrel first part after which we entertained the company with whatever came the handiest. We had gotten along very nicely with three or four numbers when we heard the front door open and who should step into the room but the man who had threatened to annihilate me. I saw what I thought was vengeance, in his eye. He started towards me, and I turned towards the door but found that someone had closed it. I did not stand upon ceremony and excuse myself, but went out of the window and to this day can hear the yells of laughter that greeted me as I went over the back fence. The Amateur Minstrels died right there. My departure was so sudden that I did not take my tambourine with me and I have not seen it since. My hat was sent to my home next day. The man who caused this stampede has been dead many years. The members of his family are, and always have been among my best friends. They have assured me time and time again that the cause of my precipitate flight intended no harm and often laughed heartily at my discomfiture. He often sent me invitations in after years to come and see him but my confidence in him was so thoroughly shaken that I never had the courage to call at his residence if I thought there was a remote possibility of finding him at home.

As I said before I never got my tambourine and do not know what became of it. I have often thought of the circumstance and wondered if it had not happened that I might not have dropped thumping the tambourine and applied myself as closely to the banjo as I have. Of one thing I am sure, I never touched a tambourine afterwards, but day after day and year after year I have become more and more of a "Banjo Crank," until now it has grown on me so that I have a banjo in my Parlor—Library—Bed room—and Office, to say nothing about those I have at intermediate points.

As I have stated in former letters, while in the army I was always watching for darkey banjo players on the different plantations in the vicinity of camps where we happened to be. In September, 1863, our corps being then attached to the army of the Potomac, was ordered west with General Joseph Hooker, better known as Fighting Joe, to reinforce the army under General Rosencranz, who had been defeated by General Longstreet at Chicamauga. Our division (Gen. John W. Geary's) was halted at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where we went into camp. The country thereabouts was well settled and the town looked better than the average southern town that we had been accustomed to seeing in Virginia. While there we were given more privileges about our camp than we had had in Virginia, but a strict order had been issued prohibiting our visiting the town without passes. As usual with me I began to make inquiries of every negro I could see as to the whereabouts of any banjo players among the plantation negroes in that vicinity. After awhile I was well enough acquainted with a number of darkies near our camp to be on speaking terms with them, and I always kept uppermost in their minds, the fact that I wanted to hear any darkey banjo player that they might know of. One day a contraband came to me and told me that on a certain day there would be a dance at a house in the town at which the musicians would be principally banjo players—knowing that it would not be possible for me to get a pass to go in to witness the dance and that it would get the negro into trouble if I took him along to guide me and the "Patrol" captured us, I told him to keep his ears open and let me know at what house the dance would be held and I would trust myself to get there. I did not forget to give him a portion of what little money I had about me, thus enlisting him in my cause. The next day he came back and as near as he could, described the square in which was located the house where the dance was to be held. I took two members of my company into my confidence and as all soldiers were ready at any time for a little fun, it did not take much persuasion on my part to induce them to join me in attending the dance.

The festivities were to begin in the morning and continuing through the day; were to end when the guests chose to cease dancing. I was orderly sergeant of my company and as my captain was absent and not having either a first or second lieutenant I was in command of the company, and therefore supposed to be more attentive to my duties than an enlisted man, consequently if I violated any rules of camp, the punishment and disgrace would be greater than under ordinary circumstances. The temptation however, was too great for me to resist and when the—to me, eventful morning arrived—I had the roll called, details made, camp policed and morning reports made out earlier than usual so as to be ready to start for our objective point as soon after surgeon's call as possible. As near as I can recollect we started at about ten o'clock in the morning. Being in command of the company, which fact was known to the guards, I had no difficulty in passing my two comrades through the camp guard. We had some trouble in getting through the guard that was watching the approaches to the town, but we managed to get through after which our great danger lay in eluding the soldiers who patrolled the town. We went in the direction that I had been given by my "unbleached American of African descent," and had not gone very far into the town until we heard the squeaky tones of a violin and "ker plunk" of a banjo coming from the centre of a collection of houses that seemed to occupy a whole square. We made our way through alleys and across fences to where the music proceeded from.

When we reached the house we found the windows all closed either with shutters or boards, but there

was a "mighty thumping and a scraping and rushing of feet" inside. We held a consultation and I came to the conclusion that after the risks we had run and with the "promised land" so near, we would now see the end of it or "perish in the attempt." As I was the "Boss Crank" it was decided that I should take the lead and if it led to trouble I was to do my utmost to clear my partners in guilt and stand all the disgrace that could be heaped upon me. I then went to the door and boldly tried it. It was not locked. I raised the latch, opened the door and went in, followed by my comrades. Such a sight! I never had seen and never again expect to see anything like it again. All daylight had been shut out and the room, quite a large one, had been illuminated with tallow dips. It was, I suppose, quite a high toned affair in darkeydom. Every available point in the large room had a tallow candle fastened to it. The musicians—one violinist and two banjo players—were on a platform at one end of the room. The assemblage, which consisted as near as I can remember of about seventy to eighty people, all dressed in the most fantastic manner imaginable. The colors of the rainbow were not a circumstance. I do not think a person could expect to see such a sight but once in a life time. The most exaggerated minstrel representation of plantation life could not equal it. Everybody present seemed to be in the excitement, soul and body. The dancers, those who did not dance, the musicians, all were keeping time to the music, some shuffling their feet, some patting, and others singing and shouting, while all were sweating as if their very lives depended upon it. They did not seem to make a pleasure of it but went at it as if it was a business that they must follow, each frantically endeavoring to out do the other.

Here was a scene that I had often wished to witness, a regular plantation frolic and my friends and I stood in a corner determined that not a particle should escape us. We had scarcely got settled in our positions when a couple of darkies came up to where we stood and said, "Dis am a private pah-ty and no outsiders are 'lowed in." They then went back and took part in the dance. I noticed that many of the dancers kept looking toward us and in a short time there seemed to be a consultation going on among them. I imagined trouble was brewing and it was not long before my suspicions were verified. The music stopped and three or four men backed by the whole assemblage came towards us, one of them said, "Dis am a private gadding and we have been pinte a committee to ask you to get out," I told them that we meant no harm and merely wanted to look on, that we would willingly pay them for staying, and argued the point quite awhile. They left us and we decided to stay and see the fun out. We were being frowned on from all sides and it was not long before I noticed that the principal talkers had left the room while the others stood around in knots whispering. I told my comrades that I feared that they had gone for the Patrol and that we had better get outside where we would have an equal chance. We started out, none too soon, for we had barely gotten around the house when we saw the "Coons" coming with a lot of armed soldiers. We began to jump the fences while the Patrol called on us to "Halt! or we'll shoot." These threats only lent wings to our flight. We got on the road with the Patrol close behind us. Fortunately we met some artillery men riding a horse each and leading others to water. I ran up to one and told him that the Patrol was after us with every prospect of capturing us before we reached camp. That if he and two of his men would let their led horses go we would mount and galop out of reach of the Patrol and then turn the horses loose and turn them back. They let go the horses and we mounted and were up the road on a dead run in an instant. When we got to a safe distance we dismounted and turned the horses back on the road and gave them a cut with a switch and made our way as rapidly as possible to camp. The Patrol followed us as near as they could but did not see what tents we went into. They reported the matter to Brigade headquarters and the brigade was turned out. The Patrol marched down the line and tried to pick us out, but we had changed our caps for hats and they did not recognize us. It was my last opportunity to look for any banjo players in that vicinity. A short time afterwards we were sent to the front and soon were engaged in the Battle of Lookout Mountain and the Chattanooga campaign.



The Banjo contributed by S. S. Stewart to the Merion Fire Co.'s Fair, at Ardmore, Penna., in November, was drawn by Mrs. J. Jay Shelmire. Over two hundred chances were sold on the Banjo, which was one of the most admired articles at the Fair.

DeWitt Bacon, DeWitt, Ga., writes:

"In reading over the sample copy (No. 72) sent me, I see where Mr. Baur says in his letter that from ten to twenty guitars are used to every banjo, in the South, while the proportion of violin players is, at least, double that number.

I will agree with Mr. Baur in the above, as to City darkies (although I believe *five* guitars to one banjo would be a better proportion), but when you take the *Plantation* darkey, you will find fully ten banjoists to one guitarist. Of course, the banjos, as well as the playing are very crude; the banjos being the kind usually sold at from three to five dollars, when new, and after being in a darkies' hands for a year or so, the repairs necessary to keep it together, would remove all resemblance to its original self. The style of playing is the old *slap and jerk*, and a few *Break-downs* is about all one of them can play. The bridge is nearly four inches long, and an inch high, and the strings are veritable ropes.

As I have lived in both Savannah and Atlanta, Ga., and am at present living on a plantation, I have had ample opportunity to notice such things, and, being somewhat of a banjoist, have investigated slightly. I add the above remarks to my order, as I thought perhaps they may interest you."

We give space to the above remarks for the benefit of our readers: Such things are always of interest.
EDITOR.

William Hancock, Beachmont, Mass.:—"I have taken the *Journal* for some time and think it the best Banjo advocate published. I have one of your *Universal Favorite* Banjos, and have sold four this fall. I get them from J. C. Haynes & Co., Boston. I have tried all kinds, but find your Banjos take the lead of them all. Boston is a great place for different makes of Banjos, and I know that if the players would only give the Stewart a fair trial, they would stick to it as I do."

Frank L. Hauer, Washburn, Wis., writes:

"The *Journal* came duly to hand. It is simply *immense*, and is certainly the most value rec'd for fifty cents since the passage of the McKinley bill. I had the pleasure of trying one of your banjos for a few minutes last evening. I thought I had a good 'jo—it has 38 brackets,—is hammered and nickle-plated,—has Greek cross pegs, and a walnut neck. But say! His Stewart is as far ahead of my banjo, for tone, as a Courtois cornet is ahead of a fish-horn."

George Carr, Scranton, Pa., writes:

"I have a Club, here, called the Scranton Imperial B., M. and G. Club; I also have a Club, called the Keystone B. and G. Club. We have all Stewart Banjos except one, and that will be replaced with an S. S. S. as soon as we make some more money. Business is good—in fact booming. I have all hours filled here: One of my pupils was sick this P. M., and I take the time to write you this note. Let me say that the No. 2 *Champion* I bought of you, while at Milton, Pa., in June, '91, cannot be bought for any reasonable price: I have a standing offer of \$60.00 for it, from a party who has a \$40.00—banjo, but my banjo is not for sale. I close, admitting that you have done more, and are doing for the banjo, than any man living at the present time."

Messrs. Adams and Travers, solo banjoists, had a Complimentary Concert, at Athenæum Hall, Melbourne, Australia, on Oct. 26th, last. The program, which came to hand just after No. 73 *Journal* had gone to press, shows that musical matters are alive out in that region. Among the numbers we find Stewart's *Phantasmagoria* Waltz, rendered on the Banjo; and a number of other modern and popular selections, also Paganini's "*Witches' Dance*," given as a Zither solo by Mr. Louis Adelet. The concert wound up with the soul stirring "*Ta-ra-ra-Boom*," and the program bears the motto—"Stewart is King."

Chas. E. Pettinos, Bethlehem, Pa., writes:

"I arrived here last night and found the Banjeau-rine awaiting me. It is a beauty, and the finest I have ever heard. It has just the tone I wanted."

O. P. Fretwell, Cedar City, Utah, writes:

"I am very sorry you do not publish the *Journal* oftener than you do. I can assure you that I devour its contents as soon as it arrives, like a hungry wolf would a piece of beef. Do not forget to give us a long account of the coming concert as soon as it comes off. I should very much like to be a witness, but I live too far away. Wish you success and long life to the *Journal*."

Frank A. Cole, Prescott, Arizona, writes:

"It is some time since I have written you. But in that time I have given up the business, I guess for good, after having spent ten years on the road. I am now head accountant for a company here, and have moved my family to Prescott. But I still keep up my banjo practice, as much as possible, from pure love of the instrument. I heard a party play your *Cream of Roses Schottische* a short time ago, and have an idea that I can execute it better if I had the music. So I am going to try, if you will send it to me, with the piano part, as soon as possible."

Passion Polka, for two Banjos, by Fred. W. Babcock, now ready, price, 35 cents.

John C. Peck, New Haven, Conn., writes:

"Your notice of the expiration of my subscription reached me to-day. Am obliged to you for notification. I wish to renew my subscription for another year, and you may send me the *Chart*, as premium, although I do not feel entitled to any premium after receiving so good a Journal. I have got one of your \$20.00 Banjos, and a better toned instrument I never heard, and in my short experience I have heard a few—but none to compare with mine."

Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Monteith, of Los Angeles, Cal., have instruction parlors for Banjo, Guitar and Violin. Mr. Monteith says:

"We consider your banjos the *best* in the market, and have sold them in North Carolina and South Carolina, where we were located previously."

They have organized a Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club, of twenty members; it is called the *Aeolian*.

E. H. Frey, of Lima, O., writing under date of December, 3rd, says that he is immensely busy, having forty-five pupils, besides Orchestra work. His Lima Mandolin Club contains twenty-eight members.

Mr. A. A. Fisher, the well known musical instrument dealer of Milwaukee, now travelling in the interests of a large Piano house, called on A. A. Farland, in Pittsburgh, in December, and heard that gentleman perform Mendelssohn's Violin Concert, op. 64, on his Stewart Banjo.

Mr. Fisher said—"You can tell Stewart that I will wager One Thousand Dollars that no other banjo player living can play that Concerto in proper tempo, as you do; and any one who desires to take up the bet will be allowed six months in which to practice it."

The Washington Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Club report business very good. The Club will make a tour after Lent.

REMINISCENSES OF A BANJO PLAYER.

(FOURTEENTH LETTER.)

BY A. BAUR



In my last letter I took occasion to refer to some incidents of army life, which have brought to my mind another that may not be uninteresting to the reader. Early in 1864 and prior to General Sherman's Atlanta campaign, our company was detailed to guard a railroad bridge across a creek in the northern part of Alabama. Our duty was to see that the bridge was not tampered with, there being many sympathizers with the confederacy in that vicinity. The utmost vigilance was required of us after dark, a strong guard being posted to protect the bridge between sunset and daylight. In the day time our duties were light, one or two men being sufficient to do all the guard duty necessary. The men not needed for service passed the time in various ways. Many women and non-combatants who lived on the south side of the Tennessee River had taken refuge on the north side of the River. There were many of these refugees who had been impoverished by the war and were compelled to accept assistance from our government. Every ten days rations were issued by our commissaries to all who wished to avail themselves of the generosity of the Yankee soldiers. Most of them gladly accepted these gifts and "Ration day" was looked forward to with a great deal of anxiety by those of us who happened to be off duty on that day. Early in the morning we would lounge around near the bridge and wait for ladies who were going to the quartermasters, and as the planks had all been taken off leaving nothing but the cross-ties on the bridge, which was a very high one, it was utterly impossible for a lady to cross without assistance. As one would appear in sight, there would always be from one to half a dozen of the boys ready for "escort duty." On their return they would have baskets or bundles which were taken in charge by the "boys in blue," and the fair owners safely conducted across the bridge to their own side of the creek. These little acts of courtesy were always performed in the kindest manner and accepted in the

same spirit. It did not take us long to be on speaking terms with many of these people, who, in their misfortune appreciated our attentions and in many instances we were invited to call at the houses where they were temporarily stopping. Near our camp was a large mansion surrounded by a number of houses that had before the war been used for servants' quarters. Quite a number of refugees had been domiciled in the mansion and buildings. These refugees were composed mostly of women and children and in a few instances, men who were too old to bear arms in one or the other of the contending armies. Their homes were in the path of the conflict or between the lines where there was always danger of being overwhelmed in a battle that was liable at any moment to take place. The able bodied male members of the families were, with rare exceptions, doing service in one of the armies. The non-combatants for their own safety took refuge in rear of one of the armies and as the Union army was steadily advancing, I suppose it looked safest in our rear; therefore we had by far the largest number of them. Most of the ladies among the refugees had seen better days and were generally very intelligent—many of them being good musicians and having cultivated voices. Those of us who were musically inclined were not slow in availing ourselves of the privilege accorded us in the kind invitations to spend an evening at the house. On several occasions we took our instruments and forming a circle around the large fire place, in which a bright cheerful fire was burning, we prevailed upon those ladies having the best voices to join with us in the circle and we spent some very delightful evenings. Our time was necessarily short, however, as we were compelled to be in our quarters when "taps" sounded. I was orderly sergeant of the company and part of my duty was to see that all orders were obeyed and no men missing at night. Among the refugees was an able bodied man whom we all suspected of being in full sympathy with the enemy. His surly manner and vicious looks betokened his hatred and ill feeling towards us. He never made his appearance at any of our entertainments, but on several occasions we discovered him prowling about in the dark and were convinced that he did not altogether like our visits. It was suggested several times that we take him to the creek some night and give him a thorough ducking; but better counsels prevailed and we made life a burden to him by singing for his especial benefit such songs as "We'll Hang Jeff Davis to a Sour Apple Tree," "Battle Cry of Freedom," "John

Brown's Body," etc. The torture to him became unbearable and "patience ceased to be a virtue." The evening of our last social visit one of the boys reported having seen our "cranky" friend lurking around suspiciously, but, as we were all provided with side arms, we were not much frightened at the prospect of an encounter with a solitary enemy, and we proceeded at once to sing our patriotic songs in the most boisterous manner, which the ladies seemed to enjoy hugely. Right in the middle of our rendering "We'll Hang Jeff Davis, etc.," our man stepped into the room and roared out: "I'll be dog-goned if this yere foolishness hain't gone about far enough. If you uns were gentlemen you would have gone home long ago." I am glad to be able to say that we had too much respect for the ladies who had invited us to start a fight there, but we managed to so surround our "Dickey bird" that he could not escape until after we had thanked the ladies for their kindness and wished them good night. We crowded the man out of the house, and after we got him out we led him to a safe distance, so that the ladies might not be disturbed by anything that might happen in case there should be a diversity of opinion, and there under the beautiful southern sky, with the moon shining, we formed a ring and chose the most able bodied man among us to do battle for his country, to avenge the wrongs that had been perpetrated by that lone, miserable wretch who was quaking before us. We assured both parties "fair-play" and one among our number cried, time! and at it they went. I do not hesitate to say that "tournament" would have done credit to John L. Sullivan and gentleman Jim Corbett. Our Southern friend acquitted himself nobly and it was "nip and tuck" which would win. After about a half hour's good hard fight, the northern troops came out victorious. It was so evenly divided though, that parts of our crowd led the victor to his quarters, while the others performed the same service for the vanquished. We then quietly stole to our tents and early next morning on May 1st, 1864, we received marching orders and the army started on the Atlanta campaign with General Sherman. Our comrade who had had the moonlight tussle was so sore for several days that we took turns in carrying his equipments. So that in the outcome we were all more or less punished for being out of camp after "taps."

* * * * *

I very frequently receive letters from persons desirous of becoming expert performers upon the banjo, asking me if I can send

them arrangements of favorite pieces of noted banjo players. Sometimes they send the names of the pieces, oftener not. I do not believe there is a performer living who has not been asked hundreds of times: "Now play your favorite piece." A request of this kind always makes me smile and feel sorry for the person making the request. I do not think I ever had a favorite piece. I always played whatever suited my listeners, and I believe it is the same with nearly all performers. If the audience becomes enthusiastic over a certain piece, the performer naturally is carried away by the same feelings, although the piece may be to him an old worn out melody that he has been playing for years and one that he is thoroughly tired of. He only plays it because it takes with an audience. About fifteen years ago Strauss' Blue Danube waltzes were very popular and nearly every banjoist played at least part of them. I knew one prominent performer who told me that he played these waltzes, Home Sweet Home with variations and the 22nd Regiment March nearly every night for three years. He complained of the monotony caused by the constant repetition of these pieces, with which he had become so familiar that he could not bear to hear them played. Yet, when his turn came in the evening, and his audience became enthusiastic, he was always imbued with the same spirit. He had the good sense to continue playing his old line of pieces until he got something better. It is wonderful how much patience and perseverance some of our most prominent players had. Many of them did not know one note from another and played entirely by ear. I never had any experience in that way, but can easily imagine what amount of labor it must be for a man to sit and listen to another drumming over a piece while he is "catching it;" and after having learned the piece, how unsatisfactory it must have been to think that after all it had been acquired second-hand. Ruby Brooks once told me that he often spent weeks over a piece before he had it learned. Horace Weston has told me the same thing.

Casey's on Sixth Avenue, I think it was north of Twenty-fourth Street, was at one time a great resort for banjo players. It was a long narrow room with a piano at the farthest end. I went one night to hear Weston, who was playing there. Horace recognized me and as I told him I intended leaving the city next day, he promised to play some of his best pieces for my benefit, but that he could not do himself justice, until later in the evening when the "boys" dropped in. I had heard him play very often before that evening but had a better

opportunity then to pay particular attention to his style than I had previously. After each selection he would ask me to name any pieces, that I would like to hear and requested me to criticize to my heart's content, and to give him my opinion before leaving. After the shows let out many banjo players dropped in; among the more prominent that I remember were E. M. Hall, George Powers, Ed. French and two of the Dobsons. The late James W. Clarke had been there the entire evening and was in high glee because Weston was at that time using his banjos. George Law, a young millionaire and an admirer of Weston's was also there. It was amusing to see Law after each piece played by Weston; he would step up to a table and throw a large roll of bills upon it, at the same time crying out: "One thousand to one hundred dollars that this black man can beat any banjo player in the world." Of course, there were no takers. We had gone there to hear the music and not for the purpose of betting; but the oftener Law offered to bet, the harder Weston played. I was among the last to leave. Before I did make a start they had begun to extinguish the lights. After I had reached the street, I turned southward on my way to the hotel down town, and just as I crossed Twenty-fourth Street I noticed Weston bare-headed running past me. I thought this strange at the time, but gave it no particular attention. When I reached Twenty-third Street, I almost ran into Weston returning. Upon seeing me he cried: "Ah! Baur is that you? I was just looking for you. I wanted to know what you thought of my playing this evening." I replied that it was nothing more than I had expected, that he played well, but I did not consider his execution so very wonderful and that judging from what I had seen in my travels the time was not far distant when both he and I would hear performances upon the banjo that would cause us to wonder. I never was an enthusiastic admirer of the "banjo style" and told him so plainly. He then said: "Well, you have heard me at a disadvantage to-night. I partly lost my head and did not do myself justice, but if you will come to my home at any time during your stay in the city, I will show you that I can play better than you imagine." I afterwards heard him play frequently both in the banjo and the guitar style. I cannot say that I admired his guitar style of playing. It was not as smooth or effective as I thought it should have been. He improved, however, and it was worth many a mile's travel to hear him in either style. There is no doubt that with

a thimble he was the most wonderful performer we have thus far had. He did not know one note from another, but if he ever "caught on" to a tune, no matter how difficult, he never forgot it, and in his own peculiar embellishments and variations he was imitable. I never went into ecstasies over any performer's execution. For many years I have contended and have taken it for granted that the capabilities of the banjo are unlimited; that each new and brilliant performer is but a fore-runner of what we may expect in the future. I have frequently remarked in these letters that "any piece of music that can be played upon any known treble instrument can also be played upon the banjo." I have never had any reason to change my mind. It is merely a matter of study and close application. The recognition of the banjo as a musical instrument, second to none, is bound to come, just as sure as two and two are four. I have devoted many years to its study. I have watched it with a jealous eye and have never for a moment wavered in the stand I took in its favor long before the present generation of banjo players ever thought of the instrument. There are now hundreds of excellent performers upon the banjo, many of whom are what might be termed artists; but for all that the instrument is still in its infancy, while every day is developing more and more its wondrous beauty and claim to rank among the best. To the thousands of amateurs who aspire to become expert executants I will say, the path to their desired goal is not strewn with insurmountable difficulties; a little patience and a fair share of perseverance will overcome the obstacles. No one need, however, expect to become an expert banjo player without practising, but the imaginary monotony of practice will be overcome as one advances in dexterity in the manipulation of the strings with the right hand and fingering with the left. After having advanced far enough to be able to play ordinarily difficult pieces, the daily practice becomes a pleasure that is looked forward to anxiously by the earnest worker, who has a sincere desire to become proficient. I have often met persons whose only ambition has been to play a few chords. It were far better if such a person never began the study of any musical instrument. They are neither a credit to themselves nor a pleasure to their friends. Several years ago I played at a parlor concert. I had prepared my programme with care, and, as there were to be present a number of doubting Thomas's and scoffers who could not be convinced that there was a musical tone that could be produced upon the banjo, I had

selected a number of pieces with piano accompaniment, that I knew must win friends for the banjo. I was not disappointed in my expectations. There were selections by prominent soloists, both vocal and instrumental, including some numbers by a string quartet. I discovered early in the evening that the banjo had carried off the honors of the occasion, and had found a place in the hearts of the assembled guests. My serenity of temper was somewhat ruffled when upon the conclusion of the entertainment, a lady, who on account of her reported numerous attainments and standing in society ought to have known better, came to me and said: "Mr. Baur, you have captured the audience and convinced us that there is music in a banjo. I would very much like to have my husband learn to play. He has often spoken of buying banjo; do you think he could learn to play as well in a short time as you do? If it did not take him very long to *pick it up*, I could play his accompaniments upon the piano. It would be so nice, you know." The idea appeared very ridiculous to me. I told her that I had been playing the banjo twenty odd years. Most of the time practising, and sometimes devoting many hours a day to hard work on the instrument; but I thought if her husband was very apt he might be able to "pick it up" in a very short time. It depended altogether on his capabilities, etc. I met her at numerous entertainments afterwards, but she never approached me again on the same subject. There are too many who would like to "pick it up," "just to be able to play a few chords, you know." I never encourage such aspirants. My invariable advice to them is: Buy a banjo, get an instruction book and you will be able in a short time to "pick it up." There are others who desire an acquaintance with the banjo because it is a fashionable fad. To these I would say, fashion or no fashion, *the banjo has come to stay*, notwithstanding the verdict of one or two would-be musicians that the banjo is not a musical instrument. Some of these narrow minded persons are so weak as to imagine that a person who has devoted a life time to the study of music and chooses the banjo as his instrument is not as much of a musician as he who has paid the same amount of attention to the study of music and then plays the bass drum in a brass band or perhaps a snare drum in an orchestra. I am happy to say that persons who say the latter is a musician and should be recognized as such by some obscure society, and that the former is not a musician and cannot be recognized as such are few and far between. For my part, I never for a moment have

doubted the realization of my fondest and most sanguine hope that the day is not far distant when my chosen instrument will stand side by side with, and receive the same recognition and praise as the most favored musical instrument.

STEWART AND ARMSTRONG'S SELECT BANJO CONCERT.

On Friday evening, March 3, S. S. Stewart and T. J. Armstrong, gave a choice concert, at the New Century Drawing Room, Twelfth and Sansom Streets, Philada., Pa.

The following is the program presented:—

1. THE CARLETON BANJO AND GUITAR CLUB,
Darktown Patrol *Burr*
2. BANJO SOLO—Annie Schottische *Boehler*
Master Fred Stewart
3. BANJO SOLO, "Near to Thee" Waltzes, *Waldteufel*
Mr. Paul Eno
4. Master WILLIE STRINGFELLOW & PET BROWNELL
In Fancy Dances
5. THE SECOR SISTERS—In Banjo and Piano Duets
6. MR. CHARLES CROWTHER
"Twenty Minutes in Wonderland"
7. STEWART AND ARMSTRONG—Banjo Duets
(On the five and six string Banjos)
(a) The Witches Dance..... *Paganini*
(b) Neapolitan Mazourka..... *Stewart*
8. THE HAMILTON MANDOLIN CLUB,
La Serenata Waltz..... *Jaxone*
9. MASTER LEM STEWART, In new vocal selections
10. MR. ERASTUS OSGOOD, In Original Monologues
11. BANJO SOLO, "Modjeska Waltzes,"..... *Lowthain*
Mr. S. S. Stewart
12. THE HAMILTON BANJO CLUB
Corcoran Cadets March..... *Sousa*

The entertainment was a complete success, ever number being received with rounds of applause.

The names of the members of the Carleton Banjo Club that participated are J. B. Hummel, Bass Banjo; E. Osgood, First Banjo; M. R. Heller, First Banjo; Joseph Ramos, Banjeaurine; C. Crowther, Banjeaurine; Charles Saxe, Second Banjo; Howard Satterthwaite, Mandolin; and Herman Fleishaeur, Guitar.

The Hamilton Banjo Club, and the Hamilton Mandolin and Guitar Club, are two distinct organizations, and without doubt the best organized and most thoroughly drilled organizations of the kind in this city; or, in fact, in any other city.

The organization of the Hamilton Mandolin and Guitar Club (number eight on program,) is as follows:—

Mandolins.

Mr. J. L. G. Ferris, Mr. Paul Eno,
Mr. W. L. Bosbyshell, Mr. J. C. Bockius.

Guitars.

Mr. F. W. Shoemaker, Mr. W. M. Webb,
Mr. R. E. Eggleston, Mr. L. Martin,
Mr. N. K. Barclay.

Mandola.

Mr. C. T. P. Brunner. Mr. Walter L. Elliott.

Arch-Lute.

Double Bass (Bass Banjos.)

Mr. Albert L. Hoskins, Mr. Whitney Bosbyshell.

The playing of these performers is so excellent, that the first prize at the Academy of Music Concert was awarded to this club, as most of our readers are aware.

The Hamilton Banjo Club is made up as follows:

First Banjos.

Mr. Paul Eno, Mr. Walter L. Elliot,
Mr. W. R. Moyer.

Banjeaurines.

Mr. Whitney Bosbyshell, Mr. William K. Barclay,
Mr. William L. Bosbyshell, Mr. C. T. P. Brunner,
Mr. H. R. Hanson, Mr. Luther Martin.

Guitars.

Mr. F. W. Shoemaker, Mr. J. C. Bockius,
Mr. W. M. Webb, Mr. R. E. Eggleston.

Mandolin.

Mr. J. L. G. Ferris. Mr. O. M. Bosbyshell.

Banjo-Cella (Bass Banjo).

Mr. Albert L. Hoskins.

Mr. Paul Eno, the efficient leader of both organizations, is master of several instruments, and his Banjo Solos (No. 3 on program) met with the applause merited.

The Secor Sisters, in banjo and piano duets, proved another good banjo attraction, adding to the interest in banjo playing among the ladies. Master Fred. Stewart handled his banjo well, and Master Lem., who never gets "rattled," sung his songs so beautifully that it was hard for the audience to let him off. Erastus Osgood, in his monologues and funny sayings, fairly captured the house, and was forced to respond to the third encore. Chas. Crowther, in legerdemain, was good; and the children, Little "Pet" Brounell and Willie Stringfellow, in fancy dances, did beautifully. Stewart and Armstrong, in duets on the five and six string banjos were enthusiastically received, and S. S. Stewart, in his Banjo solos, accompanied on the piano by Miss V. R. Secor, made a hit; especially well received was his "old time banjo solo" and imitation of the "darkey strapping his razor," which went far to prove that the banjo as played twenty years ago has not lost its charm for the majority of banjo lovers.

The stage, under the direction of Mr. Geo. B. Ross, and the box office in the hands of Mr. C. N. Gorton, were well conducted.

"And the next day it snowed."

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER.

FIFTEENTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



During the early eighties, when the rage for banjo playing began to take hold of the popular fancy, nearly everybody wanted to be a banjo player. The selection of music published for the instrument was not so large as it is now and music dealers were at their wits' ends to supply the rapidly increasing demand. Many of them got it into their foolish heads that anybody could write banjo music. I have related in a former letter, how a prominent music publishing house, at a heavy expense, had a piano-forte teacher write them a banjo book which proved as dismal a failure as could well be imagined. One of the most prominent writers of piano music, once told me that he intended writing a series of pieces for the banjo, and after getting them well introduced he would write a banjo book containing nothing but his own pieces. I told him to stick to the business of writing pieces for the piano-forte, at which he had been very successful, but not to attempt writing music for an instrument of which he had no knowledge, and for which he cared nothing except the money he might make out of it. He took offense at my presumption in telling him that he, (whose compositions were sought by many publishers who had told him that his name alone would insure the success of a piece of music), could not write banjo music. I did not care to lose his friendship, and proposed that he write a series of pieces for the banjo; when completed I would try them over for him. In about two weeks he informed me that he had studied the scales and compass of the banjo, and had arranged one of his own compositions which he would like to have me play on the banjo for him. It was a matter of only a short time to procure a banjo and find the privacy of a room in the rear of a music store where it took me about two minutes to convince him that although a capable, thorough and successful writer of music for violin or piano-forte, he did not know the first principles of banjo music. We are friends to this day, but he has never mentioned banjo music to me since.

One often meets people who have heard any number of excellent performers upon the banjo. In nine times out of ten these persons are not capable of judging as to the merits of either the player or the music played. I once stopped in a large city and, of course, about the first thing I did was to make the acquaintance of all the banjo players I could find. Nearly every one with whom I had any conversation, mentioned the name of a certain beautiful and very prominent society woman, as being one of the best lady performers upon the banjo in the United States. I was quite anxious to hear and meet her, if possible, as I imagined that I would be the best judge myself as to her wonderful execution upon my favorite instrument. I learned that she went regularly to one of the most fashionable summer resorts, and was always surrounded by a crowd of admirers, who thought her manipulation of the banjo divine. I became much interested, and my desire to hear her increased. I imagined that "where there was so much smoke, there must be some fire"—but my dreams were destined to a rude awakening. I was to play at a reception where she was expected to be present.

A day or so before the date when I was to play, I met one of the—at that time numerous "blow-hards"—who "guaranteed a tune at every lesson," while a knowledge of music was not necessary, as they had a patent system for teaching the banjo, whereby, any person could become proficient in the art of banjo playing in a few lessons. The formality of an introduction had been scarcely gone through with, when he—in the usual way—began telling me of the great success he had met with in imparting the secrets of his method to those who thought the banjo could not be played by regular music notation, but must be learned by a system called "The Simple Method." This person also told me that he had taught the wonderful player, Mrs. ———, over whom every one was raving. I knew at once what I could expect when I heard the lady perform. At the appointed time I went to the reception, and was amused when several persons told me that I must do my best as Mrs. ——— would be there to criticise my playing. I got through with my part of the programme, and afterwards met the lady. She told me that she had her banjo with her and intended playing, but that, on account of something having happened to the instrument, she would not play that evening.

A short time afterwards I heard her play. My estimate of her abilities measured by the opinion I had formed of her teacher, was correct. She played three or four bars

each of several little pieces, and also knew three or four chords. I have met with dozens of just such cases in my time, and mention it to show how ineffective the methods of the simple method cranks were.

During my residence in New York, I one morning called at a music store and received an order to call at the residence of a lady who desired banjo lessons. I called as requested, and about the first thing the lady told me was that her friends considered her a very fair performer upon the banjo. I told her that I would like to hear her play, so that I could determine as to the degree of difficulty of the pieces I proposed giving her. The idea seemed to strike her favorably, and she immediately took her banjo and went through the most ridiculous performance it has ever been my lot to witness. The most improbable and exaggerated impersonation of a plantation darkey on the minstrel stage "could not hold a candle to it." It might have been called "banjo gymnastics," if such a term were funny enough. She kicked up her heels, clawed at the strings, beat time and made grimaces, until I began to think that the whole thing had been gotten up as a joke on me, but the young lady was so terribly in earnest, that I could not help giving way to a fit of boisterous laughter. After concluding her performance and noticing my laughter, with a look of injured innocence, she said "What do you think of it?" I told her I would not dare tell her what I thought of such an exhibition, but would tell her frankly and candidly that her friends were either "guying" her, or were totally ignorant as to how the banjo should be played. After giving her lessons for over a year, she one day asked me if I could ever forget the first time I heard her play. I replied that I could "forgive, but never forget."

Another incident suggests itself: During the earliest parts of one of the musical seasons in New York, I was requested to call and give lessons to a lady from a Western city. About the first thing this lady told me was, that she had taken lessons and had succeeded in learning a number of chords by a system of patent notes that had been invented by her teacher. I told her that it was quite likely that I had heard of it before, and the first instructions I would give her would be to unlearn all that she had ever acquired by the "patent notes." She also told me that she had an elegant banjo, which she showed me. The veneering had nearly all come off the finger-board, and the banjo had a generally dilapidated appearance that suggested the thought that perhaps it had lain out in the rain for several months.

I inquired the cause, which she innocently explained in this wise. A few weeks before she had been visiting at a summer resort, where boating and fishing was one of the principal diversions. One afternoon she accepted an invitation from a gentleman to go boating, and thinking that it would be the proper thing to repay the gentleman for his kindness, she took along her banjo, intending to play while he was plying the oars. After getting a considerable distance from the shore, she took the banjo out of its case, and began to sing, whilst thrumming an accompaniment upon the instrument. Everything went along nicely for a time, when suddenly the boat gave a lurch, and, woman-like, the young lady screamed, threw up her hands and dropped the banjo into the lake. Here was a dilemma. The lady worried and fretted over the loss of the banjo, which was a present. They marked the position of the boat as well as they could by objects on the shore, and, after landing the young lady, the gentleman hired a boy to go along and rowed out to where he thought the banjo had fallen overboard, and, after three or four dives, the boy brought it up. I had the veneering put on, the rust cleaned off, the rim polished and the banjo was about as good as ever; which is not saying very much for that make of banjo. It was not very good at best. I do not name the maker but will say—it was not a Stewart—if it had been I would not last week have ordered from him the third “Universal Favorite” style of banjo within a year.

This would indicate that I am “gone” on that particular style of banjo. Right here I will say that I am. The tone, workmanship and every requisite in a modern banjo is embodied in that style of make of Stewart’s. In the matter of buying a banjo, if I had the means, I would not hesitate a moment at the price of an instrument if it suited me. I would, if able, just as soon pay one hundred dollars as one cent for a banjo that in my opinion came up to my standard, and it is from this mode of reasoning that I will, one of these days, not far distant, be the owner of one of his very finest Presentation Banjos. I have seen and tried them and know whereof I speak.

I have now in my possession a banjo that I bought in 1867. I paid twenty-five dollars for it at that time and thought I had secured a bargain. It is such a banjo as could be bought now for about three or four dollars. The finger-board and rim are veneered with rosewood; the thumbstring peg is at the sixth fret, as they were then made. The shield brackets and hooks are of brass; the bridge is an exact counterpart of the one

shown in Stewart’s American Banjo School, and is fully thirty-five or forty years old. The tail-piece is a match for the bridge, and was made at about the same time. If I were to buy a banjo like this now, I would hesitate a long time before I would give twenty-five cents for it, yet as a souvenir or memento and for old association sake, I would not take two hundred and fifty dollars for it. It is in perfect order, with the exception of the brass work, which needs polishing. Before my wife died, this instrument was always highly prized and had a prominent place in our parlor where it hung in the most conspicuous place, trimmed with the best ribbons we could procure. Since her death, that room has not been used, and I have concluded to give the old banjo to some one who will take good care of it. Who to give it to or how to dispose of it, I cannot say.

Since commencing this letter, I have thought that perhaps some of the many readers of the Journal can suggest a plan. I will donate the banjo, if some plan for giving it away can be arrived at. I have thought it might do to give it to the person (not a dealer) who buys the largest number of banjos from Stewart in a given time; or it might be awarded to the one who buys the most music or strings, or secures the largest number of subscribers to the Journal, or something of that kind. The matter is open for discussion. I would say to the readers of the Journal, that this may look to some like a scheme emanating from Stewart for the purpose of getting some trade. To those I will say, Mr. Stewart knew nothing of it. The idea is my own. As I said before, I will donate the banjo, if some one can suggest a plan for awarding it to any certain person. I would also say, that as regards its intrinsic value, the banjo would make a very poor showing compared with a banjo of the present day. Its value can only be computed as one would a rare coin or other relic of the past. The banjo has been in my possession 26 years. The bridge and tail piece over 30 years. The two latter articles may be over 50 years old as far as I know.

I am positive that no older tail pieces or bridges can be shown, excepting the bridge of which Mr. Stewart gave an illustration in Journal and American Banjo School. As near as I can learn, they were bought from Firth, Pond & Co., when that firm was located on Franklin Square, New York. To my own knowledge that was thirty-six years ago.

Let the readers of the Journal suggest a plan for a contest, the winner to become

the owner of this relic. I am willing that Mr. Stewart should adopt one of the plans that may be suggested, and, he also be the judge as to whom it shall be awarded at the final outcome.

Now, my readers, do not be backward, express your views through the Journal, and remember that no money consideration will buy it from me, but I will put it up to be contested for, and will send it to the successful person as soon as the result is known.

Banjo Strings.

The Müller’s twisted silk strings are put up, each string in a separate envelope, with the words “Müller’s Fichtelberg Banjo String, &c.,” printed thereon. The strings are put up in flat boxes, each box containing 30 strings, and each string in its own separate envelope.

These strings positively cannot be bought at lower prices than announced in our advertisements.

We have other kinds of Banjo Silk strings which are much lower in price, and the different grades of strings should not be confounded.

See advertisement in this number.

The Late Horace Weston.

A correspondent who is very much interested in the *Journal*, and particularly in Mr. Baur’s Reminiscences, is a little puzzled at the statement made in Mr. Baur’s last letter, that Weston did not know one note from another. He thinks this cannot be true; for he states that upon a certain occasion, during a conversation with Weston, he discovered that he knew considerable about music.

In publishing Mr. Baur’s articles we do so, of course, under Mr. Baur’s name as author, and he alone is responsible for the statements and opinions he offers.

We do not agree with him in his estimation of the late Mr. Weston, because a long and intimate acquaintance with him made us acquainted with his wonderful abilities and musical gifts. Weston inherited his musical talent from his father, who was a musician of ability, and a teacher of music and of dancing in the state of Connecticut.

Weston did not play the Banjo by note: that we at once admit, for at the time he took up the Banjo there was very little chance for any one to learn it by note. But he could *sing* by note, and many times has the writer handed him pieces of printed or written music and heard him sing, whistle or hum them over from the notes, as correctly as any of our Orchestra leaders could have done.

?

O, yes; I'm a curious creation,
And pray can you tell me my name?
You should when I give my description,
If you can't then, why I'm not to blame.
My body is round as a dial,
My head is as flat as a board,
My nerves are made of silk fibre,
And when properly used form a *chord*.

My sides are encased in bright armor,
Polished up to the highest degree;
And though I was never a sailor,
I am frequently used in the "C" (sea).
I have pegs, though not in my foot gear;
But placed with great care in my neck,
And should you remove them entirely,
My voice you would utterly wreck.

My voice is a medium soprano,
Three octaves my usual range;
I appear at my best in clear weather,
For in dampness I'm subject to change.
I never possessed e'en a copper,
Yet my notes are most eagerly sought;
The best I bequeath to hard labor—
You will notice my voice can't be bought.

O, yes; I'm possessed of a tail piece,
But I never allow it to wag;
The hide of a cow is my bed room,
Though my grandfather slept in a bag.
Of course you all know Mr. Stewart,
In Church Street, at two twenty-three;
He has spent many hours in my presence,
So has Armstrong, and so did John Lee.

I am frequently seen in a college,
For the students invite me to stay;
In a lady's boudoir I'm quite happy,
And I often appear at the play.
O, yes; I'm a curious creation,
And pray can you tell me my name?
You should now you have my description,
If you can't, why then I'm not to blame.

E. O.

A 16 PAGE JUMP.

We do not profess to give our subscribers a larger Journal than 16 pages; but recent Numbers have gone up to 24 and 28 pages. Now we have jumped to 32 pages. The fact is, that having so much excellent material on hand we prefer to give twice 16 pages this time, and get over it in one issue, than to string it out into two editions. Our subscribers will not complain we feel quite sure; and if the publisher is willing to bear the expense, there is no one to kick. We therefore send out this, our "Mid-summer Number," feeling confident that the "Banjo World" has never before had anything to equal it at the price. Guitar players, particularly, should welcome this Number with delight, containing, as it does, the first five pages of Mr. Newton's Practical School of Harmony for the Guitar, and one of Mr. Frey's excellent compositions for that instrument.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER.

SIXTEENTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR



On account of a banjo lesson, I once came very near having complications with the United States Navy. Among my pupils was a young lady whose father was the owner of a large yacht. It was customary in the Summer months for the family to take a long cruise, and I had arrangements with my pupil that if I received a telegram from her I was on the next day to go to a certain wharf, from the end of which I was to waive my handkerchief a certain number of times as a signal for the yacht's boat to come ashore for me. Upon receipt of the first telegram I repaired to the designated wharf, and upon my arrival I saw two vessels riding at anchor and was at a loss which one to signal; but thinking that they both would not have the same signal, I determined upon showing my signal—but to avoid showing any ignorance I did not directly face either vessel but waived my handkerchief at random. In less time than it takes to write it a boat's crew put off from the larger vessel of the two, and I began to congratulate myself upon the precision with which the boat from my pupil's yacht was being handled. I had misgivings, however, that all was not right, when upon its nearer approach to the shore an officer in full uniform was standing in the stern of the boat, and everything about it looked too trim to be the boat of an ordinary pleasure yacht. The complement of men manning it seemed large, but the climax came when the boat touched the dock. The officer saluted, and said: "Did you hail, sir?" I replied, "Yes, sir; I hailed the yacht —. If your boat is from her I want to go aboard." He answered that I had given a signal that was used aboard the U. S. Revenue Cutter —, and that I had done it intentionally. He then swore, as a sailor only can; called me a "lubber" and other endearing names, and said that he would have me punished as soon as he saw the commanding officer. I called him a "Ham" and told him his old boat was nothing but a "tub," and that I did not believe Uncle Sam would own such a

looking crew as he had with him. Amid curses he ordered the boat about and I had the satisfaction of seeing him board the man-of-war. I signalled again when a boat came for me from the yacht, where I gave my lesson and then came ashore. I never heard from the Secretary of the Navy, therefore, concluded that this outrage on our flag was never reported, and my relations with the government are as pleasant as if never marred by an encounter with one of its pompous officials.

I lately received circulars of banjo music from Messrs. Brooks and Denton, under cover of an envelope bearing the name and address of James Morrison & Co., N. Y. This would indicate that these gentlemen are in some way connected with the Morrison Banjo. This I infer from the fact that together with the banjo music circulars, there were enclosed circulars setting forth the merits of the "Morrison Banjo." I have nothing to say against this. They certainly have a perfect right to use and recommend any banjo they see fit, but I am sorry to see that they also advertise that they furnish banjo score in "Simple Method;" certainly there is something lacking somewhere—performers of their reputation and ability ought to be above such trash. They have had experience enough to know that there is nothing in the "SIMPLE METHOD" and that by advocating and encouraging the use of this, the greatest of modern humbugs, they not only stand in their own light, but it is the same old story of the "Spider and the Fly." No matter how careful he may be, sooner or later the poor unwary fly will be trapped. I am sorry to hear that two such prominent performers as Brooks and Denton would lend their influence (whatever it may be) towards keeping before the public as VERITABLE A HUMBUG as was ever foisted upon a good natured community, who in its desire to know something of the greatest of known musical instruments, is the more easily "taken in" when the information comes from persons who are well-known in that particular circle whence reliable information is expected. It is hardly worth while, however, to give this matter more than a passing thought: the death knell of the "Simple Method" and its advocates was sounded long ago, and it is only a few ignorant persons, who are avaricious enough to try and make a few dollars outside of a legitimate business, who now champion such a "fake."

It is a pleasure to me to find that my letters now and then stir some one up, as is evidenced by a criticism on an assertion I made in a recent letter in regard to the late

Horace Weston. For the information of all who may be interested I will say, my information came direct from Horace Weston himself. It came about in this wise: I had heard him play a number of times with piano accompaniment, and as I sat near the performer I heard Weston repeatedly tell the accompanist in what key to play the accompaniment, such as C, F, B flat, or any key into which he was changing or modulating. I had also had one or two conversations with him, and from the manner in which he talked I took it for granted that he played by note. If not entirely, he was to a certain extent familiar with musical notation and the rudiments. I made quite a lengthy stay in New York at that time, and one day when I met Weston on the street, I had with me a roll of banjo music that I had arranged with piano accompaniment. Among the pieces was "The Last Rose of Summer," with variations, which I had completed only a short time before. I wanted Weston's opinion and unrolled the music and showed it to him. He made the remark: "*I do not play the banjo by note. I play by ear. I do not know one note from another.*" It was then that he told me about following bands that were playing a tune he wanted to "catch on to." Now, whether his remark was with reference to the banjo only or to his musical knowledge in general, I have no means of knowing; I give his words as near as I can remember them, and when I referred to the fact in my former letter I had his own assertion in mind as my authority. I have heard him sing, but whether or not he sang by note I can not say. When I said in my letter that Horace Weston did not know one note from another, I had the man himself for my authority. If he misled me, it is not my fault. As regards the responsibility for my letters, I alone am responsible. They are sent to Mr. Stewart and he publishes them without revision. As they are written for the benefit of the readers of the JOURNAL I stick closely to facts, and as nearly as I can to those only that may interest the banjo players.

Our talented friend, Thomas J. Armstrong, in his article in No. 76 of the JOURNAL, on "Divided Accompaniment," struck a subject that has been in my mind many years. I have stated in a former letter that for some years I was a member of and played the banjo in an orchestra. When I had time to do so I arranged the banjo accompaniments. Very frequently, upon going to our room for practice, the leader would have a number of new pieces. Of these he gave me whatever part he had to spare; some times it would be a second vio-

lin, but oftener a viola part; these I transposed at sight, filling in any note that might be necessary in a chord. Sometimes I have had to take 1st and 2d cornet parts where they were printed together on the same stave, but I never thought of playing any more than the after beat as illustrated in Mr. Armstrong's article. The bass note belonged to the bass instruments, and I would have been laughed at for my pains had I attempted to fill in and play both bass and accompaniment. I have often thought of touching on this subject but as it did not come in the line of reminiscences I concluded to leave it to other hands, and am glad to see that Mr. Armstrong has taken hold of the matter. I sincerely hope he will stick to it until he has accomplished the reformation he seeks. How ridiculous it would look to an orchestra of TRAINED MUSICIANS if the leader gave the second violins and violas each a bass note with their after beat in every measure. Yet we do this very thing in our banjo orchestra, no matter how large they are. I am, and always have been, in favor of the BASS BANJO. There should be no trouble to procure a bass banjo player in almost any town. The instrument is so much more easily mastered than the ordinary banjo that it would not take a great length of time to learn the bass parts to pieces of moderate degree of difficulty. I would like to say a great deal upon this subject but it is in better hands, where I will leave it with the hope that leaders of clubs and orchestras will give Mr. Armstrong their hearty support, and encourage him in an undertaking that cannot help but benefit the banjo orchestra.

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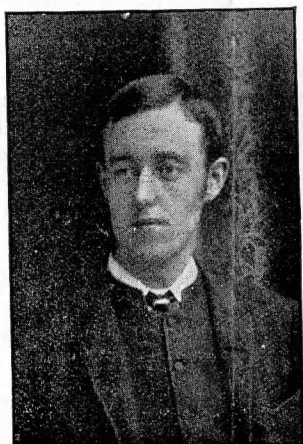
The guitar, as well as the banjo, has made wonderful progress of late years. While I was teaching the banjo in New York it was almost an impossibility to procure a reliable guitar teacher. I spent many a day looking for some one whom I could recommend. I was asked once by the manager of one of the most fashionable young ladies' preparatory schools if I could recommend a good guitar teacher. I explained the situation to her and said I could very easily get them a teacher, but as he was a stranger to me I would not vouch for him. I hunted all over the city until I gave up in despair and reported the fact to the manager. After consulting with the principal they decided to have me engage the teacher for them. He was a hot-headed, black-eyed Spaniard, and one of the best performers I had ever heard. I called at his rooms and introduced myself. In explaining the nature of my errand I told him that he must not think of charging

less than \$2 for each half hour lesson; that the parties were abundantly able and perfectly willing to pay that amount to a capable teacher who understood his business. He was amazed at the terms and told me that the most he ever received for a lesson was fifty cents, and feared that if he charged the price I had named to him the people would not employ him. I replied that I would guarantee the amount if he gave satisfaction. He called at the school and got three pupils who took two lessons each a week. For a while matters moved along smoothly and I had favorable reports from the principal who thought that I had struck a jewel of a teacher for them. One day after I had finished my banjo lessons, the principal met me and asked me to step into the office. When I did so, they told me that they could not imagine what had gotten wrong with the professor. That he called at the school at unseasonable hours, and when his services as a teacher were not required. He always inquired for Miss ———, one of his pupil, and when told that she was engaged at studies and could not be seen, he would write a note and leave it with instructions that it be delivered to the young lady. His actions had become so annoying that the servant who attended the door received orders not to allow him to come in, but on several occasions he had crowded past the servant and made his way to the office and demanded to see Miss ———. They requested as a favor of me that I see Prof. ——— and tell him if he had any account against the institution to give it to me and it would be paid, but that he must cease his visits to the school. I agreed to do so. On my way to the city next morning I stopped at my down-town office, and was surprised to find the professor awaiting me. He immediately proceeded to business by informing me that he was in love with Miss ———, his pupil, and that she had encouraged him, but the teachers had found out the secret and had notified the young lady's parents, who took her to Europe on a steamer that sailed the previous morning. He had gone to the steamer's wharf and sent his card to the lady. Receiving no response he made his way to the stateroom of the party accompanying her. They had him put off the vessel, and he had come to me for advice as to his best plans to reach the lady as soon after her arrival in Europe as possible. I told him that I thought him a fool, and my advice was now that he had lost several good pupils he had better shift for himself and get out of my office. I felt positive that the fellow was out of his mind, but he talked so rationally

that I could hardly believe it. He stayed with me nearly four hours that day, long enough to thoroughly disgust me with him and all his kind. I met him quite a number of times afterwards; each time he seemed to have sunk lower than the time I had seen him before. He had taken to drink, and every time I met him he spoke of his great trouble. I tried to avoid him and at last missed him altogether. I heard that he went from bad to worse and died in filth and rags, a victim of intemperance. I can not say as to the correctness of my information. I have not seen him and for years have not even heard of him. Were I to mention his name, many guitarists of to-day would remember him. He traveled with the Spanish Students for some time as solo guitarist. This is about as near as I dare go to identify him.

FRANK SIMPSON, Jr.

BANJO TEACHER, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND.



Frank Simpson, Jr., son of Frank Simpson, the well-known book and music seller, and musical instrument dealer, of 69 Sauchiehall St., Glasgow, Scotland, is the leading teacher of our favorite American instrument in his native city. Frank is a very affable and pleasant gentleman and is highly thought of by his large circle of acquaintances and pupils. Through his influence the sons of Scotland have formed an extensive acquaintance with the Stewart Banjo, and this instrument being largely dealt in by Mr. Simpson, Sr., its sale is constantly increasing.

HANGING SHOW CARD.

We will mail one of our new and handsome Banjo Show Cards to any subscriber to the *Journal* who desires it, and sends 4c. in stamps to pay postage on same. The size is 7 x 14 inches, black, with sunk silver lettering, and contains a handsome design of Banjo. Suitable for a wall ornament.

*THE POPULARITY OF THE BANJO.

.....BY S. S. STEWART.....

About twenty years ago I was attracted sufficiently to the banjo to become inspired with a desire to acquire a knowledge of the instrument. I am not positive in what year I first heard a banjo played, but think it must have been about 1870, and the first performer was Lew. Simmons, who was at that time connected with Carncross and Dixey's minstrels at the Eleventh Street Opera House in Philadelphia. The performances at that time were merely songs with banjo accompaniment and "jigs."

Not long after this I had the pleasure of listening to Harry Stanwood, at that time a noted performer upon the banjo, and also to Lew. Brimmer, another prominent banjoist. The music played at that time was by no means what could be called "classical," but what Stanwood played calls to mind the expression of Julian Hawthorne, the well known novelist, "It is the music of nature ordered and humanized—" for there were good banjos here and there even in those days, and there were a few—such as banjoist Stanwood—who could bring this soul-stirring music of nature out of them.

I was so smitten with the charms of the banjo that from that time to the present I have never ceased to devote a good portion of my time to the study and practice of the instrument. I have now been engaged in the banjo manufacturing business for about fifteen years, and during that time I have had an opportunity for very close and extended observation, and have not failed to mark the various progressive steps in the evolution of the banjo as the wheels of time revolved.

Seventeen years ago there were very few banjos exhibited at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. I think I can remember but one very small case containing these instruments. The musical instrument department at the great Chicago World's Fair now in operation tells a different story. Many of our most prominent manufacturers have large cases of guitars, mandolins, zithers and banjos, and the banjo is a prominent feature. I believe, however, that I am the only manufacturer who makes a display of banjos exclusively—to which my entire space of 6 x 20 feet is devoted.

I do not think that any such display of banjos as I have made at the World's Fair in this year has ever been seen elsewhere; however, I must leave that to speak for itself; suffice it to say that I deem the display of sufficient importance to have a representative constantly in attendance during the continuance of the exhibition. This gentleman, Mr. Geo. B. Ross of Philadelphia, who has taken the position spoken of in Chicago, was for some time a teacher in this city, and is fully competent to show the various points of interest to observers who may desire to inspect the banjos.

This World's Fair display will serve to exemplify the contrast between the banjo as known in 1876 and the banjo as it is made and used in the Columbian year.

At the time of the Centennial celebration, few persons were to be encountered who were at all familiar with a banjo. In fact, did you

speak of a banjo to the casual observer, ten chances to one he would have thought it was a tambourine you were talking about. Few people used the banjo then in the parlor. There was little or no sheet music published for the instrument—there was absolutely no music published for the banjo with piano accompaniment; and what few books of instruction there were were very incomplete and little adapted to the purpose of instruction. Thus, without a suitable literature, with poor instruments, and with very few competent instructors, there was nothing to give the banjo an upward impetus.

But the under current was at work even if a ripple was not observed. All this time those interested in the instrument were quietly making a scientific study of it, and their influence was sooner or later to tell.

Thus it was that about the year 1880 music began to make its appearance, published specially for the banjo, in the precise shape of music for the piano and other instruments. True at first there were few customers for the music, as there were but a scattered few who could play such music, and these scattered few were so far apart that it required much time and expense to reach them. There were any number of pretenders at banjo playing. You could find them at every hand, but the competent performer or those who had sufficient real love for the instrument to wish to elevate it, were not so easily found.

Many real lovers of the banjo at this time played in secret—were ashamed to be known as banjo players—and therefore never took the instrument out with them. A few others, like Albert Baur, now a justice of the peace in Brookville, Pa., defied musical opinion, and insisted upon introducing their banjos wherever they could. To such pioneers we owe much.

It then remained that the only place where a banjo could be heard in public was at the negro minstrel entertainments or variety shows, and the performances heard at such places were not such as were calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of musicians. The negro minstrel using the banjo soon caused it to be associated with the black face exclusively, and it being a very rare thing to see a banjo player on the stage with a white face, it is not to be wondered at that the instrument should become more and more associated with the negro.

There were a few performers who played a banjo solo in evening dress without cork on the face—such as William A. Huntley and Chas. E. Dobson—but the opportunity of hearing such performers was not very great, and the number of people who had such opportunity was greatly in the minority.

Occasionally, as the change progressed, a banjo solo would creep into the program of a really first-class musical entertainment. Such performers as Frank B. Converse, of New York, appeared at musicales, and the sound of the banjo, mingling with the accompanying tones of the piano, was heard in the parlors of the refined. Then inquiries began at the various music stores for music adapted to the banjo; calls for banjos from a class of people who had never before thought of the instrument became

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER.

SEVENTEENTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



"History repeats itself." The above fact presents itself more forcibly to my mind now than it ever did in the history of the banjo. Some of the older banjo players may remember the "closed back" banjo. When it was relegated to unused attics, lumber-rooms, and the shelves of the cheaper grade of pawnshops, I congratulated myself and thought it had passed out of sight forever, and never more would be known to the rising generation of banjo players. The fallaciousness of human hopes is demonstrated, in my case at least, by the perusal of a circular which by merest accident fell into my hands since writing my last letter. The contents of this circular would be a revelation to any person who never saw a banjo; more particularly to one who never saw a "closed-back" banjo. In this year of our Columbian Exposition, everything must be "Columbian"; therefore the circular whereof I speak refers to "The Columbia Banjo," a closed back affair, which, judging from the cuts given in the circular, is similar to the old closed back banjo which went out of existence years ago. The cuts are almost identical with some that H. C. Dobson had made to represent his closed back banjo. There have been numerous closed back banjos, the Dobson, Teed, Tilton and many others, before the "Columbia." The one to hold out longest was the Dobson. Mr. Dobson always had been an indefatigable worker, and never spared "printers' ink." In the end he acknowledged its worthlessness. Mr. Dobson told me once (I cannot state positively the year), that the best move he ever made was when he sold his closed back banjo to Martin Brothers; that now they could have the worry and trouble of booming the old closed back banjo. He did not care what became of it, as long as he received the yearly bonus for the use of his name and trouble of calling once in a while to look over the stock of banjos; that he was free to admit that the closed back banjo never was the success

he desired for it, but that before long he would have a new banjo to offer, which he thought would be a success and bring him in a fair share of patronage with a good profit. Shortly after this the "Bell banjo" made its appearance and Mr. Dobson's hopes have to a great extent been realized. For a time his banjo had a large sale, and Mr. Dobson amassed enough of this world's goods to insure him against want for many years to come.

* * * * *

One of the great drawbacks to the more rapid advancement of the banjo is the fact that there are so many persons going into the business of its manufacture, who, through a lack of adaptability, are entirely ignorant of the smallest matters pertaining to the instrument; yet they claim to make better banjos than those who have devoted a life's study to the art. I have no "axe to grind," and as I am not a maker of banjos, it cannot be said that I have an interest in crying down all banjos not of my own manufacture. My object is to give the readers of the *Journal* my experience in many years association with the banjo, its makers and those who have it nearest at heart,—its players. As is evidenced by the circular referred to, the maker of the "Columbia Banjo" has shown his ignorance to an eminent degree. To begin with, he says, "The only three octave banjo ever made." Wonderful! I have never seen a properly constructed banjo that did not have a compass of three octaves. I have a twelve inch, an eleven and a half, an eleven, a ten, a piccolo banjo, and a banjeaurine within reach, all of which have a compass of three octaves, or 22 frets, excepting the banjeaurine. Yet the remarkable assertion of this newcomer may and doubtless will catch the shekels of a few would be banjo players who have never taken enough interest in the instrument to look around and become acquainted with the requirements and the compass of a properly constructed banjo. There are to day numerous banjo players traveling about the country who never heard of a closed back banjo, or that such a banjo had ever been made, and was years ago discarded as worthless, and incapable of being brought up to the standard of even an ordinary factory banjo; to say nothing about the beautiful instruments that are daily being turned out by the skilled workmen and masters in this particular branch of the art of making musical instruments. Thousands of dollars were spent in advertising the original closed back banjo, and when such a man as H. C. Dobson threw

it aside as unworthy of further experiment or outlay of money, I do not think it worth while for any one else to attempt to make a success of it. As the Dobson closed back banjo was protected by "Letters Patent," it is difficult to conceive how another can claim originality and receive a patent, that judging from the cuts is as much like the Dobson as it is possible for it to be. It may, however, be merely a revival of the same old corpse.

In a former letter I spoke of having at one time seen a device for "*throwing the tone away from the performer*," (as expressed in the circular before me.) It was similar to a shallow dish pan, and was made of tin, an inch larger in diameter than the rim of the banjo. The back of the banjo rim was put in the pan, which in its turn was fastened by a screw through its center to the stick under the banjo head. This closed back banjo possessed one merit not found in the new fangled arrangement of which I am writing: The tin pan could be taken off when the performer tired of it. As regards the claim of the "Columbia Banjo" being the only three octave banjo, I will say, this claim is most absurd and ludicrous, and shows how ignorant a man can be if he will not learn. Every banjo player knows that if a banjo finger-board has twenty-two frets upon it, the banjo is a three octave banjo. A banjo can be made such by lengthening the neck, or raising its proportion to the rim. Shifting the bridge forward also has the same effect. Twenty years ago it was customary to fret banjos with eleven inch rims and nineteen inch necks with twenty-two frets, making them "three octave banjos." This practice was discarded to make room for improvements since inaugurated. I cannot imagine anything easier than to describe a three octave banjo. Make one with ten inch rim and 19 inch neck; with this for a starting point the matter becomes as plain and simple as can be. The claim "Only three octave banjo ever made" shows a sad lack of knowledge of the simplest detail pertaining to the banjo and its past history. The phenomenal rise of the banjo and its elevation to the foremost rank of musical instruments has brought to the surface many would be inventors. It would take many pages of valuable space in the *Journal* to describe a hundredth part of them as applied to the banjo. The best evidence that none of them ever "set the world afire" is that we have to day the same old "open back" banjo we had fifty years ago. The same old banjo is now used by every performer of note or con-

sequence. Who ever heard a performer on an open back banjo complain of the tone of his being "smothered in his clothing," or "lost behind him" as is claimed by the champion of the closed back banjo? He also says—"As the wooden rim on an open back banjo seasons, it shrinks from the metal rim which is spun around in, leaving it loose, no matter how tightly spun at first." This reminds me of another would be inventor, more properly speaking a crank, who a few years ago was working in a certain musical instrument factory. He took out letters patent on a banjo, which he evidently thought would "fill the bill" and fill his till. The rim of this particular banjo was made of brass with a narrow strip of wood set into a groove or gutter, just under the head. His idea was that the head must always be tight, even in damp weather, because the wooden strip would swell as the dampness set in, and in expanding, force the head tight. The absurdity of this soon became apparent. If wood is so badly seasoned that it will serve the purpose of a barometer, it is unfit for use in a musical instrument. I have a nickel rim banjo made by an honest workman twenty-one years ago; another made thirteen years ago. If any one can show me where the wooden rim has shrunk away from the metal rim in either of my banjos, I will agree to buy one of the very best Columbia Banjos made. I never could liken a closed back banjo to anything but a guitar with a banjo head.

There are other assertions made by the maker of the Columbia Banjo that will not "hold water" such as "the vibration is not retarded by a stick running under the head." This can be answered that the closed back banjo has a back that retards vibration a hundred fold more than the simple "stick running under the head." Again quoting from the circular,—“The wooden rim being stiffened at the bottom by a back, and at the top by a metal rim, and then securely fastened to the neck, there is no stick required to keep the strings from drawing the back of the rim out of shape.” One of the worst of many faults in all closed back banjos was the liability of the constant tension of the strings loosening the neck at the rim. The following assertion,—“The neck is made in sections with grain of wood reversed; this prevents the warping so much complained of in solid necks,”—shows an unaccountable ignorance of the subject on which he is basing his claim. Who ever hears of a solid neck nowadays, except in

the cheapest kind of a factory made banjo? All necks are now made with different layers of wood. As for the closed back banjo standing damp weather better than an open back banjo, I have seen and handled hundreds of the former, and anyone who ever had one will agree with me that the closed back banjo, when it becomes damp inside of the back, retains the moisture much longer than an open back. So much for this new or rather old and discarded closed back banjo. I can see nothing in it but the resurrection of the Dobson. As I before remarked, the cuts are almost identical. It must be expected, however, that with the "boom" the banjo is now enjoying, there should be many persons ready to put almost anything upon the market without regard for its adaptability. The only object of these persons is gain. They have no love for the instrument or knowledge of its requirements. I keep a sharp lookout for all improvements, but have failed to find anything to substitute for the banjo, pure and unadulterated, in the same shape it was fifty years ago. With the improvements in workmanship, material, and a thoroughness in every detail, the conscientious maker of to day has brought the old banjo to such a state of perfection that nothing remains to be desired. I expect though some of these days to hear of some one inventing an attachment that will teach a man to play without practising. If ever it does come, I presume there will be plenty of persons foolish enough to buy one. I recently heard of a patent "Guard for banjos," designed to protect the clothing of the performer. This might have been well enough years ago, before the clothes protecting nut had been invented. The hooks were generally unfinished at the end and the nuts were unfinished. This had a tendency to wear the clothing of a performer, particularly a lady's dress. The different parts of a banjo are now so well finished that there does not seem to be a necessity for covering the brackets with a guard. It would hardly be possible to imagine a banjo with all the appliances and attachments that have been foisted upon the public as necessary accessories, without which the inventors would have us believe the banjo a very crude affair. It would take a banjo as large as a cart wheel to hold one half of these different appliances. Let the reader picture a banjo with an "arm rest," a "damper" or "mute," a patent tail piece, a sliding Capo D'Astro, a "Guard," with one of the latest works on the simple method; and over all a tin pan, screwed on the

back of the banjo to throw the sound away from the performer. These are only part of the improvements. (?) I have not mentioned a device in the back of the banjo to tighten the head with one turn of a screw. It would take a Sandow to manipulate it, and reminds me of a contrivance that was invented during the early part of the late war, wherewith we of the north hoped at the first meeting to annihilate our southern brethren. During one of our first campaigns in the mountains of Virginia, owing to the bad condition of the roads, it was impossible to keep the artillery up with the main body of troops. As this was a serious drawback some old fossil hit upon the plan of mounting small cannon upon the backs of mules. A saddle was made and upon it was securely fastened the cannon with the muzzle pointing backwards, and over the mule's tail. The intention was to lead the mules up into the line of battle, turn their backs to the rebels and fire the cannon. The plan was good enough as far as it went; but the first time we came near the enemy it was discovered that the friction primers did not fit the vent of the gun, and a fuse was substituted. The cannon were loaded before the artillery reached the line of battle; the mules were then led to the front and gotten into position for firing the guns. There was considerable skirmishing which made our long eared friends nervous. When everything was in readiness the fuses were lit and those dog-goned mules, true to their nature, turned the muzzles of the guns from the rebels into our own lines, causing us to scatter in every direction and beat a hastier retreat than if the whole rebel army had been at our heels. These batteries became familiarly known throughout our army as "Jack-ass batteries." They were short lived and were discarded a short time after their organization. So it is with the Jack-ass banjo. It is more liable to injure the manipulator than to edify the listener. The reader can rest assured that none of these so called improvements are of any benefit to the banjo. If there was any merit in them they would be adopted by reliable banjo makers who are ever on the lookout and ready to pay well for anything that tends to improve the banjo.

Doubtless many will wonder where the people come from who purchase such affairs as the closed back banjo, or the numerous patent devices for improving banjos; some of them must surely find a market. The query might be answered thus: There is nothing that people are so universally fond of, and nothing that they are so universally ignorant of as music, and especially matters

pertaining to the banjo. I would also call the attention of the reader to the fact that not a prominent player before the public plays upon anything but a legitimate fifty years ago style of banjo, modernized, without any back attachments or other useless appendages. If you will consider that "one must learn by experience," you have the answer as to who buy the "fakes."

I thought when the closed back banjo, comet like, disappeared some years ago from public view, there would be an end to it. But its reappearance on this planet would make one almost believe that there must be some truth in the Oriental theory of *re-incarnation*; not only of men, but of banjos also. How else can the reappearance of the closed back monstrosity be accounted for?

GRAND

***BANJO

CONCERT

.. by the ..

Jersey City Banjo Club

.. at the ..

Tabernacle, Jersey City, N. J.

.. on ..

Monday Evening, October 16, 1893

The greatest combination of
Banjo Players
ever brought together
on one stage

A. A. Farland, of Pittsburgh
Gregory & Farmer, of New York
Brooks & Denton, of New York

Wm. George Rush, of Brooklyn
The Jersey City Banjo Club
Miss Marion Short, of New York

Little Eva Mudge, of Brooklyn



Banjo clubs, banjo and guitar clubs, and mandolin clubs should get "into harness" at once, and begin training for the Grand Prize Concert and Tournament, to be given at the American Academy of Music, Philadelphia, Pa., on Saturday evening, Jan. 13, 1894.

Henry W. Funk, Hagerstown, Md., writes:

"While speaking of the banjo, I must say that I am wonderfully pleased with the Orchestra Banjo I got from you last March. The oftener I look at it the better I like it. So long as I have had it, it has never failed to please anyone that has seen it, and I am sure never will. I am getting your *Journal* regularly and would not be without it for five times its cost, only would like to have it come oftener, and when I join church I will recommend you and your banjos, and hope and pray that you will never be forgotten."

C. S. Vail, Millbrook, N. Y., writes:

"Any one who says that No. 77 *Journal* is not worth the price of the year's subscription certainly cannot appreciate musical instruction."

The Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club will play in the Y. M. C. A. course concerts, Philada., in February, 1894, for the sixth consecutive year.

R. W. Yeoman, Butte City, Montana, writes:

"I would be pleased to testify to the merits of the \$60.00 Orchestra Banjo, that I received from you about a year ago. I can truthfully say it has the finest tone of any banjo that it has been my fortune to play upon. I never hesitate to recommend anyone that wants a first-class banjo, to S. S. Stewart, as he is king in the banjo line. I have been offered, several times, by different parties, what I paid for my instrument, but I always answer that \$100.00 would not buy it. It has a sweet and clear tone, and at the same time, very full and loud."

Thos. M. Pethick, Silver Creek, Neb., writes:

"The Universal Favorite Banjo, No. 2, you sent me through Messrs. Kohler & Chase, was received on the 17th inst., and gives entire satisfaction. I have had something to do with banjos for thirty years, and to say this banjo gives satisfaction is putting it very mild indeed. I have the same old story to tell—it is, that Stewart is the king banjo maker of the world."

L. Lee Meader, New Orleans, La., writes:

"The \$60.00 Orchestra Banjo which Prof. Henderson ordered for me, arrived safe, and after a week's trial, it has so far surpassed my most sanguine expectations that I thought it but just to you and Prof. Henderson, who recommended it so highly, to let you know how well pleased I am. The low notes are full and rich, while the high ones are loud and clear; the tone as a whole, is the most brilliant I have ever heard."

You who like good waltzes for banjo with piano accompaniment, of the style "Bass tuned to B," should get Armstrong's "Love and Beauty," price 75 cents, and "Queen of the Sea," 75 cents. These are the two most popular selections of this description by this talented composer. "The Dawning Light," by Stewart, is another good waltz—with "Bass to B"—; and if you are looking for good waltzes, without the banjo bass string having to go to "B," we can recommend "The Wayfarer," 60 cents, "Phantasmagoria," 75 cents; and we have plenty of others if you already have these. Of polkas,

schottisches, marches, etc., we have a large and varied collection, enough to delight the musical senses of the banjoist for many years. If we could but acquire a knowledge of all of these without the trouble of studying and practising them how nice it would be. In that case the demand for our music would be so great that we should have to duplicate the plates in order to print our catalogue fast enough.

The trouble with banjo music is only that it is not so very easy to learn a lot of new selections. This is true particularly when one is a novice and has no teacher or competent friend to play the pieces over for him first, in order that he may get "an idea of them." But it is not like it used to be, for all that. There are a great many more who can read and execute the music than there were five or ten years ago. The *L'Infanta March*, published in our last issue, would have been "Greek" to most players of the banjo, had it made its appearance ten years ago. Now, we have young fellows in this town with the hair just beginning to sprout out on the upper lip, who can take that march and read, if not well execute it, in fairly good shape. Truly, the banjo art is progressing. The dampools and their "simple methods" are evaporating.

Jas. Haslett, Ramey, Penna, writes:

"The Thoroughbred Banjo arrived safely. It is the finest banjo I ever saw, and the tone, I think, could not be better in any kind of a musical instrument."

John Dodge, Corning, New York, writes:

"My banjo is in perfect condition; after four years use, one could not tell it from a new one, except the tone is better. It gets a new head about once a year, which gives it a new appearance."

Harry Alford, Coopersville, Mich., writes:

"Find enclosed 50 cents for the *Journal*. I would say that it beats any instruction book I ever had."

Chas. Henlein, the well-known teacher of Cincinnati, O., writes:

"This is my tenth anniversary for the *Journal*, from '83 to '93. I have just compared the August number of 1883 with the present August number (77), and the improvement that ten years has produced in the banjo world is simply wonderful. I don't think any other instrument can compare with it in rapid progress. The current number of the *Journal* is certainly ten times better in every detail, and worth ten times the amount asked for it, compared to the number of 1883, and yet how glad we were to get that little eight page paper, with its little simple jigs, Hornpipes and Schottisches. Now I am anxious to know what the next ten years may bring us. If, the improvement is the same as the last, then, indeed, will the banjo be first of all musical instruments. To you, no doubt, is due most of the progress of the banjo in the last ten years, and I know you will keep on with the good work."

Thanks, Brother Henlein; we will do our best to keep the banjo before the people, and as often as circumstances permit will give our subscribers the benefit of the double number, *a la 77*; but we cannot afford to print so large a paper each time, as the returns will not as yet warrant the expense. It will require a large increase in our list of paid subscribers before we can guarantee the permanent issue of a paper containing more than 16 pages. Let each subscriber assist to that end by inducing his friends who are musically inclined, to subscribe.

Editor.

Now that the "closed back banjo" has made its reappearance on earth—turning up at the World's Fair—, doubtless many of our young beginners will gaze upon it with staring eyes and open mouths. Those familiar with the banjo and its history for the past twenty or thirty years, know that many "closed-back" banjos have been born, sickened, died and buried during that period. And yet there are some would-be banjoists, with just about ten minutes experience in the business, who think the "closed back" is something new. "Live and Learn" will soon become the maxim of the inexperienced.

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

EIGHTEENTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



No doubt many persons who write me for information concerning the banjo, wonder why they do not receive answers to their letters. I owe many apologies for my seeming neglect. I answer as many of them as I can, and it is my intention and wish to answer every letter that I receive, but I find it utterly impossible to do so as promptly as I would like to. Not a day passes that I do not receive from one to a dozen letters, asking for enlightenment on some subject concerning the banjo. Some ask for music that I may want to give away; others ask if I will give lessons should they come here. The fact is, the subjects are as numerous as the letters, each letter having reference to a different subject. As regards the giving away of music, I would say I have an immense collection, a great deal of which would be of value to any beginner. I have distributed an immense quantity of it, and very much of what I have left I have packed in boxes and stored away. To look through my collection every time I receive a letter, and select a number of pieces suitable for the applicant, would require the services of an assistant. While I would willingly give this music out gratuitously, I do not imagine that it would be as acceptable as some later and newer publications, which are now so plentifully advertised by all dealers in banjo supplies.

To those looking for banjo music, ranging in difficulty from the easiest pieces for the beginner to the most elaborate solo for the finished performer, I would suggest that they look over Stewart's catalogue. If they cannot satisfy themselves from that, they must indeed be hard to please. My plan has always been to play any piece that came before me. If it had any merit I would commit it to memory. In that manner a person becomes familiar with many movements and styles that could not be in any other way acquired. I have found in many other cases, where pupils were anxious to learn, they became discouraged for the reason that when they bought a piece of music in very few instances would the left

hand fingering be marked. For this reason I have been careful to mark the fingering in all pieces that I have had published for the banjo. Faulty fingering is a drawback to rapid and perfect execution, therefore the teacher should in all instances mark the left hand fingering. This will not only be a temporary, but a permanent advantage, to both teacher and pupil. A pupil who has been taught a systematic fingering, in a measure will be independent of the teacher. One can then take a piece of music, and in the absence of the teacher "work it out" for him or herself. Frequently, after finishing a lesson, I have left a collection of music with a pupil to select from, and on the following visit have found only a few finishing touches necessary to enable the pupil to play the piece.

A large number of the letters I have received are from persons who live where the services of a competent teacher are not easily procured. Some have asked for advice on different subjects pertaining to the study of the banjo, while a number have asked if I would give lessons if they came here. A city or town that does not contain at least one banjo player, capable of giving some sort of instruction on that instrument certainly is far behind the age, and I pity the inhabitants thereof and would advise them to build a fence around their town, and post "No Trespass" notices all over it. Should any one come here in quest of knowledge, I am sure I would be willing and glad to enlighten them as far as my knowledge of banjo-playing goes. As a recompense for my services, I would ask for nothing further than the satisfaction that the services so rendered were appreciated, taking it for granted that a person who would come such a distance for the purpose of becoming proficient in the art of banjo playing, deserved to be encouraged, and should receive all the assistance it would be in my power to render.

I have received several letters from persons who have read my letter in the last *Journal*. Several of them asked for the address of the makers of the "closed back banjos," just to write for a circular that the writer might see what they look like. To these I would say, I never keep circulars or addresses of parties who deal in an article for which I have no use. I have been "intimately acquainted" with the closed back banjo in all its forms and shapes, for twenty-five years, or more, and think I am perfectly safe in advising all in any way interested in the welfare of the banjo, or those desirous of purchasing or becoming the owner of a good banjo, to let the closed

back monster alone. They are not good for either the beginner or the advanced player.

In a former letter I referred to the fact that at one time the pawn-shops of New York were fairly loaded down with them, and anything would buy them. I have gone into the stores and looked at them, and have been offered my choice of the most elaborately finished ones at my own price. I am not prejudiced, but firmly convinced that they cannot be made to compare with the open back banjo. Why they should be called a banjo is beyond my comprehension. They are not at all similar, only that they are round. You might as well call a potato an apple, because some potatoes resemble an apple in shape. More properly, they might be called a very poor imitation of a *very, very*, poor guitar. If a person came to me for banjo lessons on a closed back banjo, I would not hesitate an instant in declining to become the teacher of an instrument of that kind.

I am very much pleased to see the rapid advancement that is being made in the class of music that is being played upon the banjo. From the very first, I have contended that any music that could be played on any known treble instrument, could also be played upon the banjo. Many have laughed at me, and have called me a "banjo crank." The laugh is "on the other side" now. It is not many years since there was a wide distinction between the "banjo player" and the "classical banjoist." The former was the ordinary "plunker," whose sole ambition was to play a selection of jigs, reels, clogs, or, at most, a march in the banjo style, with a tinkle. When, after years of constant application and study, he arrived at the dignity of playing in the guitar style such solos as "Home Sweet Home," "Blue Bells of Scotland," "Carnival of Venice," &c., &c., with variations, he was called a "classical banjoist." The time is not far distant, perhaps not in my time, but some of our rising young banjo players will certainly see the time when the banjo will stand side by side with the most honored and perfect instruments in existence, and when the works of the old masters will be considered within the compass of the banjo, and as acceptable to the most refined ear as if played upon what is now termed the king of instruments, the violin. The time will also come when the profoundest musical minds of the world will consider it an honor and one of the greatest of accomplishments to be able to write music for the banjo. I feel as positive of this as I know that I am writing this letter.

Only those who have watched the progress of the banjo for many years as I have watched it, can conceive how much the banjo has advanced in the past thirty years, or how rapid has been its progress to the front rank of musical instruments in the last fifteen years. Its capabilities are only just becoming known. The next ten or fifteen years will open up such beauties as we have never even dreamed of.

Last year I expected to be present at the banjo concert in the Academy of Music, in Philadelphia, and I had made all arrangements for being there. Unforeseen circumstances, however, prevented and robbed me of anticipated pleasures. If nothing intervenes, I hope to be able to take in what promises to be a better one in every respect, (if it is possible to make it so) in the same place next January. I think it well worth a many hundreds of miles trip to hear the talent that Messrs. Stewart and Armstrong are arranging for. It will be a treat for the teacher as well as the pupil.

AWARDS AND PRIZE MEDALS.

The Columbian World's Fair has at last closed, and about all the exhibitors of any import received awards. Good! Awards, diplomas, medals, etc., are very nice in their way.

As we stated some time ago in the *Journal*, we like awards; particularly when they are given by judges who are expert performers on the banjo and "at home" when handling the instrument or discussing it.

It is a great pleasure to know that Alfred A. Farland plays such music as Mendelssohn's Concerto, op. 64, and Beethoven's Sonata, op. 30, together with other classical music, originally written for either the violin or piano, upon the banjo of our manufacture, and that such music can be produced from the Stewart banjo, even by so able an artist as Mr. Farland.

Yes, it is a source of great satisfaction to know that this wonderful banjo player plays this high class music on a banjo, and the banjo that suits him best is a Stewart.

Then there is George W. Gregory, the great New York player; can it be other than a pleasure and satisfaction to us to know that he considers the Stewart banjo the "only musical banjo in existence?"

This alone speaks volumes. But when we come to consider the hundreds of other eminent players using and preferring the Stewart banjo to all others, we feel a sense of satisfaction which no other kind of award could possibly produce.

We do not know just what ability the World's Fair judges may have possessed as

banjo experts, but the following clipping from the New York *Musical Courier* is enough to set one to thinking:

A BEAUTIFUL JURY.

The banjo is primarily an American instrument. But the instrument has become so popular that its introduction into other countries has been quite general. Still the foreign jury that paraded lately through Section I, and made an exhibition of its stupidity, knew but little of its make-up.

One of the judges expressed surprise that the tail of the finger-board ran through the rim. The learned expert thought that the drum of the banjo should have no support at all. He evidently supposed that the strings exerted no special strain on the rim of the head, and that the finger-board could have ended at the nearest rim. After this was explained to the learned jury, one of the greatest of the experts wanted to know, "Why do you put that little peg down the side? Why is it not on the top like other pegs?"

The gentleman in charge of the banjo exhibit was inclined to tell His Expertness that the peg was for the purpose of hanging the banjo up by, but as he did not want to hang the jury, he explained just why the fifth peg was placed lower down than the other four. About this time he became angry and said rather pointedly: "Did any of you gentlemen ever see a banjo?"

There was an instant silence, and then the greatest of the experts replied:

"Yes, I think I saw one once in London."

As this is actually a fact, what do the small goods men think of any diploma that the foreign jury may give on their goods? Beautiful jury, is it not?

Personally, we have no fault to find with the judges, believing them to have been no better and no worse in that capacity than is usually the case. We did not give ourselves any concern in the matter, having already received the highest possible commendations from the greatest judges of a good banjo in the world.

Besides, the Stewart banjo is known as the best banjo made—and so recognized wherever a banjo is played.

Now that we have a Farland to play the music of the old masters on a banjo, something that has never been done before, the props will soon be knocked from under those who sneer at our only native American instrument, and the really fine banjo will become more in demand than ever.

The prize medal and diploma awarded the Stewart Banjo at the World's Columbian Exposition are very nice in their way, and will be treasured as mementos of the Columbian year, but the autograph letters of our leading banjo artists, speaking in highest terms of praise of the Stewart banjo, must always have first place in our esteem.

The opinions of the World's Fair Judges are of value on a banjo only because of the official position of the parties.

The opinions of banjo artists, like Farland, Gregory, Lansing, Hall, Mack, Pow-

ers and others, are of value, not only because the parties are known to be excellent performers on the banjo, but also because it is known that they play the Stewart banjo, and would not do so if it were not the best banjo to be had.

FARLAND PLACED UP ON A HIGH PINNACLE.

HIS PLAYING DECLARED TO HAVE PRODUCED THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE BANJO.

SOME PRESS COMMENTS.

From the *Jersey City News*, Oct. 17.

Who would imagine that such music as a Beethoven Sonata or an intermezzo from Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* or Rossini's Overture to *William Tell*, could be essayed upon a banjo without driving the greater part of the audience to inebriety? And yet the performers last night did really play those numbers in a manner which gave the most critical evident pleasure.

The man who attempted these classical numbers was Alfred A. Farland, a serious looking young man from Pittsburg, whom the bills designate as the "Paderewski of the banjo." He is certainly a talented performer, and has developed a wonderful system of right hand fingering, which renders it possible for him to make these classical works enjoyable on a banjo. He was accompanied by Miss Annie Farland. G. W. Gregory and William B. Farmer, two artistic performers, after playing the selection from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, aroused the enthusiasm of the audience to the highest pitch by the spirited manner in which they rendered the "Washington Post" and "High School Cadets" marches. Mr. Gregory is a grandson of old Dudley S. Gregory, the first Mayor of Jersey City, and he had many friends in the audience. But he and his partner, Mr. Farmer, deserved all the encores they received.

From the *Commercial Advertiser*, N. Y., October 17.

The Jersey City Banjo Club gave a concert last night at the Tabernacle, Jersey City, assisted by A. A. Farland, the Gregory Trio, Brooks and Denton, William George Rush, the leading banjoists of the country, and Marion Short and Eva Mudge, readers. The piece de resistance of the evening was the masterly performance of the Gregory Trio, composed of George W. Gregory, W. B. Farmer, banjoists, and Charles Van Baar, pianist. Their playing is marvellous, and the possibilities of the banjo under their treatment a revelation.

From the *Evening Journal*, Jersey City, October 17.

Time was when the banjo was regarded as a barbaric instrument, fit only to be picked by semi-savage fingers. The legend has it that Ham, the first "nigger," becoming lonely in the ark, made a banjo with strings of opossum hair, and "knocked out" tunes to the intense delight of the rest of the family. Many of us can remember how, in the palmy days of Bryant's, and Christy's and Wood's, and the San Francisco minstrels, the banjo, in the hands of some grotesquely attired fellow was quite a feature. Then we saw it rise gradually until there were champion banjo players, who proudly handled silver-plated

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

NINETEENTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



"There is nothing that people are so universally fond of as music; yet, there is nothing they are so universally ignorant of." Most people claim to have an "ear" for music. When put to the test there are very few who know, or can distinguish, one piece from another. I had a forcible illustration of this fact to-night. I attended the performance of a minstrel troupe in our Opera House. Among the numbers on the programme was a banjo solo. After the "show," I met a friend who accosted me with,

"Hello! how did you like your — Polka as it was played this evening?"

The performer had played a march in 6-8 time, yet my friend could not tell the difference between it and a little polka that he had heard me play dozens of times. This is not quite as bad, though, as the mistake of a certain newspaper man, now employed upon one of the most prominent New York daily newspapers. He had a hobby. It was to become a musical critic, and with that end in view had studied the analysis of a number of extremely classical compositions, together with all the musical dictionaries he could get hold of. In this manner he became familiar with many musical phrases and technical terms. He edited one of the two daily and weekly papers in the town where I lived, and was a frequent visitor at my home where I gave him every opportunity to air his musical knowledge.

In the course of events, as they occur in a suburban town, a concert was given in the town hall, or opera house, by local performers, most of whom were much better than the average village musician. I was billed for a banjo solo with piano accompaniment. Among the other performers were three gentlemen whom I shall call Smith, Brown and Jones. Smith had a wonderfully sweet voice, and used it with good effect. Brown and Jones played the violin and cornet. Though with no pretensions as to musical ability, except as amateurs, they were both good in their lines. Unfortunately for them they had in some manner gained the enmity

of our would-be critic. For some reason, to me unknown, he had taken a dislike to these gentlemen, and, as it turned out, he took advantage of the concert to vent his spleen.

The concert came off and was unusually good for an amateur entertainment, and would have gone into history as one of the most successful entertainments of the kind that had ever been given in the town, had it not been for the egotism and desire of our newspaper friend to air his musical knowledge and at the same time annihilate a trio of worthy young men, against whom he had a trifling personal spite. How he succeeded will appear in his "Notes on the Concert," as they appeared in his paper the next day, which was, as near as I can recollect as follows. After giving a synopsis of the programme and the object for which the concert was given, he went on to say—

"Mr. Smith, who unfortunately possesses no voice at all, tired the audience with his efforts to show that he could not sing. It is only through the goodness and kind-heartedness of an indulgent audience that performances of this kind are tolerated. Mr. Brown then scratched the fiddle a little, after which Mr. Jones tooted on the horn a while. Having undergone this torture, the audience was better prepared for the event of the evening — Mr. Baur's Banjo Solo. His appearance upon the stage was the signal for vociferous and long-continued applause. His rendition of that sweetest of all melodies *Home, Sweet Home*, was a masterly piece of work and is indescribable. For twenty minutes he held the large audience breathless and spellbound. His trills, tremolos and remarkable execution, was a revelation unlooked for by even the most fastidious critic present," etc., etc.

I knew nothing of this article in the paper until the evening of the day after the concert. I was getting off the train when I was met by my friend and would-be critic, who immediately hailed me with: "Say, Bauer, what piece did you play at the concert last night?"

I replied, "Why, 'The Last Rose of Summer,' with variations." All I heard was, "Great God," and he disappeared in the crowd of commuters. Upon my arrival at home I found the evening papers, and after dinner read the article quoted above. The opposition paper, which went to press an hour or two after my friend's paper had been issued, contained a notice like the following. After noticing the performance, the article went on to say: "The criticism of a man who cannot tell the difference between such old and well-known melodies

as 'The Last Rose of Summer,' and 'Home, Sweet Home,' is of so little consequence that it should not be noticed by the gentlemen who rendered their vocal and instrumental solos in such a masterly manner at the concert last evening." I never afterward heard of my friend attempting to criticise a musical performance. I think he was entirely cured of his ambition to become a musical critic. I have the clippings somewhere in my scrap books and prize them as being particularly funny in the "Press Notice," line.

I imagine it is the same all the world over. You meet persons daily, who (in their minds) know all about music. When I meet such a person, I "size him up," and it does not take very long with the exercise of a little judicious "fencing" to find out that the knowledge claimed is only in his mind. It is a trite saying, "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," and applies to an assertion made in a new banjo book that recently came under my notice. I said "a banjo book"; I should have said several books; and, as I believe it to be my duty as well as the duty of every one having the welfare of the banjo at heart to warn the unwary, I will call the attention of the reader to them.

Two of the books are published by Richard A. Saalfeld, of New York. One is called "Edward C. Dobson's Orchestra, Banjo and New School Selections for Banjo and Piano." It was copyrighted in 1892, and contains the assertion referred to above, as follows: "'Nigger Joe,' a Louisiana field slave, was the pioneer of banjo music; but it remained for the Dobson family, nearly half a century afterward, to teach the world the wealth of harmony that the seemingly simple instrument yields to the cunning hand of the master." In the language of the critic referred to above I can only say, "Great God!" Where would the banjo be to-day if we had depended upon the Dobson family for its advancement?

There is but one answer, the banjo never would have advanced; and by no possible chance could it ever have reached its present state of perfection in such hands. It is out of the question and never could have been done. There is but one of the Dobson family who ever attempted to apply musical notation to banjo playing. He has made a success of it. The remaining Dobsons have always persisted, and still persist, in advocating as veritable a humbug as was ever invented, the "Simplified Method," and they know it. They could not help but know that their method is a humbug, by which no one was ever known to become a

banjo player. They know this to be a fact, but continue to have book after book published representing that they can teach a person to play the banjo in a few lessons. Why they persist in these assertions is to me incomprehensible. They are all good banjo players, as far as playing the instrument "by ear" goes; but when they come into competition with the *modern* banjo player, they are "not in it."

It might have been different if they had applied themselves to the study of music a few years ago. They might now, with pride, be able to say, "We, too, helped advance the banjo." I deny that they can claim that right now, their work has been the worst kind of a detriment to the advancement of the banjo; and to convince the reader that I feel that my opinion is right on this subject, I am ready at any time to deposit one hundred dollars, and at the same time name a piece of music for any one, or all of the Dobsons together, to write in their simple method for the banjo. If they can do so in a manner that the piece can be played by any one without their first teaching the person the time, they can take the money. I am so confident of what I am doing, that I am willing to make this offer good for from one to five tunes—they to deposit a like amount. Here is a chance for some one to make five hundred dollars very easily if the assertions of the "Simple Method" teachers are to be depended upon. Only the simplest tunes can be represented in the "Simple Method," and then to be able to play them the learner must be familiar with the tune or melody.

In the concluding pages of the book, Mr. Dobson gives some pieces for the banjo in the "Simple Method," while a piano part is given in regular notation. To play the banjo part, the performer ought to be familiar with regular musical notation; even then he could not get the proper time in the banjo part.

The second book published by Mr. Saalfeld, is styled "Dobson and Litta's Simplified Method for the Banjo." It has no date of copyright, and is (if it can possibly be so) worse than the first book mentioned. Upon looking through it I find it a rehash of tunes published in other books of "Simplified Method" for the banjo—and is simply gotten up to sell. I have known Mr. Ed. Dobson many years, and have often listened to his masterly performances on the banjo. I believe if Mr. Dobson had devoted as much time to the study of music as it is applied to the modern banjo, as he has to the "Simplified Method," he might now take some credit with having helped to

advance the banjo to its present position. If I am not mistaken, I gave Miss Litta a few lessons, and found her an apt pupil, who, with proper application, would undoubtedly have made a capable teacher and performer. It is a wonder to me that a man of Mr. Saalfeld's reputation as a publisher of music, would publish such trash as a "Simple Method" for any instrument.

The third book is called "Lohman's Surprise Banjo Method," a perfect self-instructor, without notes. Copyrighted 1893. This method is indeed a surprise. It is a series of diagrams of a portion of the finger board with the left hand fingering marked on each string. The idea is not at all original; I have seen it applied to different positions on the finger board in books for various instruments by regular musical notation. That Mr. Lohman does not know anything about the banjo is evidenced by the fact that his work is full of mistakes from beginning to end. In his introductory notice, he states—"Where one lady banjo player was found a few years ago, several exist to-day." If he had multiplied the number by hundreds, he would have been nearer the mark. "The fundamental principle of learning to play upon a musical instrument is to begin exactly right." How a man can make an assertion like the above, and then offer such a conglomeration of inaccuracies and contradictions as are given in the "Surprise Method," is a mystery to me. Passages like the following will cause a smile to broaden the countenance of even an amateur who has begun the conscientious study of the banjo by proper methods: "A few days is all that is sometimes required to develop the necessary facility and celerity in the manual manipulation of this most popular and pleasing instrument." "The student who possesses a fair ear for music will be able to play easy pieces and to 'pick' out a good accompaniment without any other teaching whatever." "It will be noted that the musical staff is absent from our 'Surprise Methods' for any instrument, for the very simple reason that it is not needed. Notes are also omitted for the same reason."

For the same "very simple reason," I would say that neither a musical staff nor notes are needed in the "Surprise Method"; because, if ever any one is humbugged into attempting to learn by that method, he or she will not be long in discovering their mistake and secure the services of a competent teacher, who will put them on the right course to success by the legitimate method.

"It is not desirable to require that an

elaborate course of musical notation and thorough bass be taken at considerable expense, and occupying a good deal of time, when our 'Surprise Methods' will teach one to play good music accurately in a short time," is merely a bait thrown out to entrap the unwary. To become a good banjo player it is not necessary that one should study "Thorough Bass." If, after becoming tolerably proficient in the art of banjo playing, a person should desire to become more thorough in the science of music, it can be done by devoting what spare time one has to the study of Harmony and Thorough Bass, for which, by the study of the banjo, by musical notation, the foundation at least, has been laid, which is not the case in studying the "Surprise Method."

No musical knowledge whatever has been gained, while much valuable time has been lost. I do not care to take up too much space with this method, but some of the ideas expressed so plainly, show the ignorance of the writer on the subject of banjo playing, that I think it will amuse my readers fully as well to continue on this subject as if I took up another. In his instructions for the different styles of playing, Mr. Lohman says:

"BANJO STYLE."

"This style requires the use of the thumb and first and second fingers. The strings are played near the bridge for the purpose of producing a more penetrating tone in rendering tunes where it is desired that the banjo assume the leading part; also for stage purposes, when the *air, with which but few choruses are demanded, is played. In this connection it should be stated, that to cause a more forcible vibration of the strings in vigorous movements in stroke playing, a thimble is used on the first finger to permit the proper effect. This is the old style of playing many of the original plantation melodies.*"

The above, we must all admit, is about as "clear as mud." Now, mark his explanation of the Guitar style: "*This is exemplified by bringing the thumb and the first three fingers into play.*" Under general instructions, he says, "The ear may be ever so accurate, Lohman's Surprise Method in hand and a good instrument provided, but without practice the banjo cannot be well played. A certain amount of dexterity and celerity and touch must be acquired, all depending upon muscular discipline." I would advise that with each copy of the "Surprise Method" sold, he ought to give as a premium to each purchaser, a pair of dumb-bells, Indian clubs and a punching bag. I judge he never saw anything but a factory-made banjo.

Again quoting, "The banjo is calculated

to be very serviceable if *fairly well* made. An ordinary instrument will last for years, and furnish good music," etc., etc. I wonder what he would say if he saw a Stewart? I'll warrant he would never again mention a "fairly well made" or an "ordinary instrument."

After these preliminary instructions, the "Surprise Method" contains the diagrams before mentioned. In the D chord, the left hand fingering is given as follows: first finger on second string at first fret, second finger on third string at second fret, third finger on first string at third fret, and fourth or little finger, on bass string at fifth fret. How many banjo players can stop this chord on an eleven or twelve inch banjo? Another awkward chord is the E minor change—first finger on third string at fifth fret, second finger on fourth string at sixth fret, third finger on second string at seventh fret, and fourth finger on first string at seventh fret. This chord would have been very easy had the fourth finger stopped the first and second string at seventh fret, leaving first and second fingers as they are given.

D Minor change: second finger on second and third strings at fifth fret, third finger on first string at eighth fret. A major change: first finger on second string at sixth fret, second finger on fourth string at seventh fret, third finger on third string at seventh fret and fourth finger on first string at ninth fret. This chord would have been easy with second finger stopping third and fourth strings at seventh fret. Still a more difficult chord is his F sharp minor, with first finger on third string at seventh fret, second finger on second string at ninth fret, third finger on first string at ninth fret, and fourth finger on fourth string at eleventh fret. B minor: first finger on third string at tenth fret, second finger on second string at tenth fret, third finger on first string at twelfth fret, and fourth finger on fourth string at fourteenth fret.

The most impossible chord of all, however, is that of D minor, in which he gives the left hand fingering as follows: "First finger on second and third strings at first fret, third finger on first string at third fret, and second finger on fourth string at fifth fret."

These are only a few chords I have picked out at random. There are many others that I might give, but think I have gone far enough to show how well a man *cannot* write a book when he knows nothing about his subject.

I have now written quite a lengthy letter on these two greatest humbugs of the present age. I have no hesitancy in saying that Congress should pass a law, with a severe penalty attached, for the protection of persons who desire to become banjo players and who are hoodwinked into buying "Simple Methods" for the banjo; and any dealer or publisher having in his possession or offering any such method for sale, should be classed with "green goods" merchants, and punished accordingly. We have one great consolation, though. It is the fact that the number of banjo players is increasing so rapidly that it is only a very few of them who get caught. I shall always consider it my duty and the duty of every banjo player, to use his best endeavors to caution those about to begin the study of the banjo, to have nothing to do with any person who deals in, or advocates the use of, these so-called "Simple Methods."

THE CENTURY WHEELMEN.

The managers of the Prize Contest, given on January 13, wish to tender thanks to the Century Wheelmen Club, for the use of its gymnasium in which the rehearsals of the Banjo Orchestra were held.

The Wheelmen certainly deserve congratulations on the splendidly equipped and complete club headquarters, they have established at No. 1606 North Broad Street. Surely with the asphalt pavement on the outside, and such unsurpassed facilities for taking care of the wheels on the inside, and the large, well ventilated and complete gymnasium, nothing is left undone or to be desired. A bicycle club, foot ball team, banjo club, mandolin and guitar Club, and minstrel company—all under one roof—and yet, they call Philadelphia "slow."

Well! We may be slow in some minor details; but as to bicycle clubs and banjo clubs, we are in advance of the rest of the earth.

When it comes to banjo concerts, Philadelphia stands right up at the head of the column.

Just think of it:

Banjo Orchestra—one hundred and fifty people.

Academy of Music—the home of the muses.

Big rehearsals in the gymnasium of the Century Wheelmen's Club House.

Big success of the Banjo Concert followed.

Most surely Philadelphia leads the world.

MANDOLIN FAD AND BANJO MUSIC.

A correspondent in Omaha, Nebraska, favors us with the following newspaper clipping. Such reports often get a little mixed. We believe the mandolin spoken of in this instance is the instrument *presented* by Messrs. Lyon & Healy, to the actress.

"Actresses and singers, as a rule, lavish their affection on pets, but my only pet is a musical instrument," said Miss Corinne, at the Paxton to-day. "The mandolin is my hobby. I have the honor of possessing the famous Washburn prize winner instrument exhibited at the World's Fair, which required a large amount of labor in its construction and is of American manufacture. There are four distinct qualities of pearl used, the different effects being produced by the various natural colors or shading of the different pearls. The marquetry on the back of the head piece contains over 200 pieces and the finger board is jeweled. It cost me \$1,500, but I had my heart set on it and didn't care for the expense. It contains over 2,000 separate pieces of various material and I treasure it very highly. It requires constant practice to be a successful mandolin player, a fact which the young ladies and gentlemen of Omaha who are interested in the subject should bear in mind. I spent a delightful afternoon yesterday with a young lady friend of mine at the Convent of the Sacred Heart of this city, and as she is a great admirer of music I took my mandolin along. I think that the banjo is a back number among social fads."

It will be a grand good thing if proved to be true that the "*Banjo is a back number among social fads*," because it is now being recognized as a high class musical instrument.

Read the following from the Wilkes-Barre Record, of Jan. 17:

EXCELLENT MUSIC.

Surprisingly beautiful music on the banjo by Mr. Farland—Local assistants—The banjo concert given by A. A. Farland, under the direction of Daniel Acker of this city at the Grand last night, attracted a large audience. Mr. Farland is perhaps the greatest manipulator on the banjo in America, his execution being simply wonderful. It is only a few years ago since this instrument found its way into refined musical circles. Prior to that time its popularity was confined to the minstrel stage, where it interpreted the sweet and simple melodies of the plantation. But lately it has sprung into great favor, until at present it is one of the most popular instruments of the day. The rise of the banjo is due to the genius of such men as Farland, who have discovered in it music heretofore unthought of.

* * *

At this point Farland made his first bow to a Wilkes-Barre audience and received a hearty greeting. Accompanied on the piano by Miss Annie Farland, he gave the overture to William Tell. His brilliant execution brought out the possibilities of the instrument, and at the conclusion he was compelled to respond to an encore, giving Houser's "Cradle Song."

* * *

The event to which banjo players looked for was Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 30, by Farland. It was a revelation in banjo music and the performer won a tempest of applause by the brilliant manner in which it was executed. He was accompanied by Miss Farland. The only criticism in order is that the piano was subordinated too much to the banjo, which rather diminished the effect of an otherwise fine performance.

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTIETH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



I lately came across a copy of the *Banjo World*, published in London, England, by Messrs. Essex and Cammeyer. The efforts of the *Banjo World* seem to be centered on advertising what they call a "Zither Banjo" in that country. Of course, it is not for a moment to be supposed that an Englishman would adopt an American idea; therefore they invent as un-American an instrument as possible. I said *invent*. It is merely an adaption of a very poor apology for a banjo. The *Banjo World*, No. 2, contains a cut of a closed-back banjo—a perfect fac-simile of the same old "Dobson closed-back banjo." This is called "Temlett's Improved Zither Banjo, with steel strings; the most powerful toned instrument made." This firm also advertises "Patent Astral and Ajax Banjos, wholesale and for exportation." I once before said that a closed-back banjo is not a banjo at all. It is only a poor imitation of a very poor guitar. The *Banjo World* seems to have a perfect mania for "Zither Banjos." I notice several advertisements, all extolling the wondrous qualities of the "Zither Banjos." One firm calls the attention of banjo players to such monstrosities as the following: The "Mandoline-Zither Banjo, built with the back in mandoline style;" the "Mandoline Zither Banjeaurine, with closed machine head for tuning steel strings." The "Mandoline-Zither Piccolo, with closed machine head and steel strings, completes the Zither Banjo Band." They also agree to "carry out faddists' notions, and make patentees' banjos." Another maker advertises, "Zither Banjos a specialty." These banjos certainly cannot be intended for anything but a "notion," and the advertisers are trying to take advantage of the "banjo boom" which has struck England, and foist upon those anxious to learn to play the banjo, some sort of an instrument that they would have people believe is a banjo. It is acknowledged that the banjo is an American instrument. If this is the case, those advertising anything but the legitimate American banjo must be deceiving the public. It is the same the world over; unprincipled persons are taking advantage of the popularity of the banjo, and as it costs a trifle more to import an American banjo, they do not hesitate to make something cheap, call it a banjo, and then humbug the unwary. In my experience I have found it to be the invariable practice among music dealers to recommend an article out of which they can realize the largest profit, regardless as to its real worth. I have often been placed in trying positions, out of which it was hard to see my way clear, without

compromising music houses, with the members of which I was on good terms.

In the way of explanation I will relate a couple of instances, first stating that a factory made banjo does not cost one-half as much as one that has been made in a thorough and workmanlike manner; therefore, even if a music dealer should handle a good banjo, like the Stewart, he would not hesitate to recommend a factory-made banjo as being better, for the reason that his margin of profit is so much larger on that banjo. After locating in a city it is customary for the music teacher to enter his name in the "Professional" book of as many music stores as he may choose. Persons seeking the services of a teacher call at the music store and make inquiry of the clerks, who refer to the "Professional" book, and give the names and standing of those teachers whose names are entered.

Very often orders are left with the clerks for a teacher to call at the residence of the person desiring instruction. One morning I visited a certain music store where my name had been entered in the "Professional" book. I was told to call at a prominent hotel, where a lady wished to take banjo lessons. When I called on the lady I found that she was ready to begin at once, and had already purchased a banjo, which was shown me. I recognized it as having been made by a man who made the cheapest grade of banjos. I had frequently been given the prices of such banjos by the maker. His price at the factory was four dollars and fifty cents. After giving the lesson I asked the lady where she had purchased the banjo; she replied that she had bought it only a few days before at the music store where she had left the order for me to call upon her. She remarked that it must be a good banjo as she had paid fourteen dollars for it. I thought the price an outrageous one, but dared not say anything for the reason that I had been recommended by the firm from which she had bought the banjo.

A short time after this I secured another lady pupil at the same hotel. She had a banjo, the counterpart of the other lady's, but had bought it through a friend who was connected with a house that sold musical merchandise at wholesale only. This lady had bought her banjo at wholesale, and had paid seven dollars for it. Even at this price the wholesale dealer had a large margin. This lady was particularly well pleased, for the reason that she knew what the first lady had paid for her banjo, and imagined that she had a bargain in having secured an instrument at what she thought was "half price." I would not have given seven dollars for a whole train-load of such "truck."

I would often call at a music store and be asked to "string up" a lot of banjos that had just been received from the factory. I would take all the strings off and put on new ones, tightening the heads and doing the best I could towards making them as presentable as possible, and the reader can imagine how embarrassing it would be when I called at a residence and found one of the banjos I had put in order only a day or so before, and would be told that the banjo had been purchased because Mr. Jones or Mr. Smith, the dealer, had told the buyer that the banjo had been inspected and put in

thorough order by Mr. Baur, on which account he could recommend it as being a first-class instrument. Almost any person who has ever consulted a catalogue of musical instruments knows that the prices are marked very high.

I once had an amusing experience in purchasing a piano. A friend had asked me to select an instrument for him. He wanted a good piano and was willing to depend upon my judgment as to price and quality, and I wished to give him any advantage as to discounts from list prices that I could secure. Before making the purchase I called upon a dealer in piano fortes and told him that I had a friend who intended purchasing a piano, and that I wished him to have any benefits in discounts that I could get.

Having arranged these preliminaries satisfactorily, I saw my friend, who decided that he and his wife should visit the wareroom with me and select an instrument. When we arrived at the place we were turned over to the clerk in charge of the piano department, who showed us all the instruments. After having carefully tried them over, my friend's wife chose an upright piano, that was listed at six hundred dollars. Upon inquiry, the clerk informed us that the price for the instrument selected would be one hundred and seventy-five dollars. My friend paid this amount at once and the dealer agreed to deliver the piano, together with a stool, that same day.

The delivery was made as agreed upon, and my friend was well satisfied with the manner in which he had secured the piano at such a liberal discount. A few days afterwards I called at the dealer's place of business, and had no sooner entered the door than I was hailed with, "Say, Baur, our clerk made a mistake in selling that piano the other day. We have done nothing but scold him since we made the discovery. He ought to have charged two hundred and seventy-five dollars, instead of one hundred and seventy-five. It would not take many such mistakes to ruin us. We depend upon you to make us safe. We want you to see your friend and explain the matter to him and collect another hundred dollars from him. I have not been able to sleep on account of worrying over the stupidity of our clerk."

I told the gentleman that it would be impossible for me to do as he wished; that under no circumstances would I go to my friend and ask him for the amount he desired me to. I left the establishment and never mentioned the matter to my friend. About a month or so after my conversation with the dealer, I had occasion to visit his place of business. One of the clerks told me that Mr. — wished to see me in his private office. Upon my presenting myself before him, he called to the bookkeeper, saying, "Mr. —, please give me the check for Mr. Baur." He then handed me a check for forty dollars, and explained that the check was in payment of my commission on the sale of the piano to my friend. I was utterly dumbfounded, and told him that it was a surprise to me; that I did not expect it, and intended that my friend should have any benefit that might accrue from discounts to me, and that I would prefer not to take the check. He insisted, however, and said, "Of course, it is not much; we did not

make anything on the piano, or you should have had more for your trouble; but, under the circumstances, it is the best we could do, etc., etc." I took the check, but never could tell my friend, for fear that he might imagine that I "stood in" with the music dealer.

I have often wondered what his real profit could have been. He certainly must have kept the lion's share for himself. Here was a piano that was listed at six hundred dollars. It was sold at one hundred and seventy-five dollars, out of which there was a further reduction of at least eighty dollars (if the dealer gave me as much as one-half).

I relate the above incident just to show what an immense profit dealers in musical merchandise have on their wares.

It is the same with these "Zither Banjos." They are made to sell, and to return the largest possible profit to the makers. It is an easy matter for the English maker to pass off almost anything on the people there as a banjo. Not one in many thousands ever saw a banjo, and if an unprincipled person there should advertise a cart-wheel as a banjo, I have no doubt at all but that there are plenty of people who would buy and attempt to learn to play upon them. The reader can rest assured that the *modern banjo* is a native of America, and is not made in any other country under the sun. I have seen quite a number of banjos that were made on the "other side." Those that I did see I would not allow a pupil of mine to practise on. "Everything goes," though, over there. I once had a chance to go to London to teach the banjo, and have half regretted that I did not go. A very large and prominent house doing business in London sent instructions to a music house in New York to have a banjo teacher sent over. The senior member of the firm offered to guarantee my own and my wife's expenses over and back and for a year in London. I considered the matter and decided that I would not go; it is too far away from home, and at any rate, the United States is good enough for me. I should not care to go to a country where I might be compelled to play upon a "Zither Banjo," or where they judged a man's capabilities according to the degree of rapidity with which he executed a piece of music upon the the banjo. One of the writers on the *Banjo World* has made the discovery that one who has studied the banjo knows that it is capable of interpreting the inspirations of Gounod, Moskowski, Mascagrie and Delibes. This is a late day to make such a discovery. The banjo always had the same capabilities it has now; all it needed was a lot of American players to bring it out. Had we depended on England and English players to develop the wonders of the modernized American banjo, it would have been buried in oblivion. As far back as 1865 to 1870, I arranged and played selections from Beethoven's sonate Pathetique opus 13, Marcia Funebre from sonate opus 26, "March" Vivace movement in sonate opus 101, Allegro Vivace 3d variation sonate opus 109, and many other selections arranged from the works of Beethoven, Mozart, Handel, Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Abt, Schuman, Schubert and others, including the overtures from the "Bohemian Girl," "Caliph of Bagdad," "William

Tell," etc. I have the mss. copies of these pieces among my collection, with the date of the arrangement of each piece, marked at the time it was made. They all have piano accompaniments. If I had this English writer here I could easily convince him that in America the banjo has been "coming to the front" for a number of years, and will continue to do so, notwithstanding the fact that our friends "across the water" have fallen into the erroneous idea that the "closed-back" humbug is a banjo. When I hear of a man using steel strings on any instrument excepting a piano or dulcimer, I set him down as a drone, and not fit to be classed among the followers of the "divine art."

In my last letter I spoke of a young man whose sole ambition was to become a musical critic, and his failure to "set the world afire." Since my letter was published I have read in the newspapers that this young man has been elected to a seat in Congress. This ought to encourage "Zither Banjo" makers and players, "closed-back" banjo freaks, and "simple method" cranks. They can have the satisfaction of knowing that, even if they cannot become banjo makers and players, they have a fighting chance of being elected to Congress. For my part, I believe I would rather be a fourth rate banjo player than a first-class Congressman.

S. S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar

•BUDGET•

PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

Here is where you get plenty of music for your money. Only one quarter of a dollar buys this book, and we pay the postage on it to your address.

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Merry Serenaders March, for banjo and guitar; Fly Away Polka, banjo; Leoto Waltz, guitar; Castanet Dance, mandolin and guitar; Sarlight Polka, banjo and guitar, Roy's Favorite Waltz, guitar and mandolin; Polonaise, "Lillian" guitar; Fernwood Polka, guitar; Starlight Polka, for banjo; Pitkin Redowa, guitar; Tidal Wave Mazourka, guitar duet; Dawn of Evening Waltz, guitar; Advent of Spring Polka, banjo duet; Annie's Dream Mazourka, guitar; Hennessey's Minor Jig, banjo; Bicycle Galop, guitar; O Fair Dove, guitar; Liquid Inspiration, zither; Opal Waltz, guitar; Columbia Reel, banjo; Philomela Polka, banjo; Thoroughbred Hornpipe, banjo; Let Her Rip Reel, banjo; Little Josephine Waltz, guitar; Eclipse Polka, banjo; Zulu Reel, banjo; Louisville Jig, banjo; Columbia Schottische, banjo and guitar; Primerose Mazourka, banjo; Sweet Reverie, guitar; Botsie Waltz, banjo; Lettie Schottische, banjo; Johnny Boker, banjo song; Arkansas Traveller, banjo; The Devil's Dream, banjo.

Twenty-five cents buys the above named book, containing the foregoing collection of music. Enclose 25 cents in U. S. Postage Stamps with your order.

Address, S. S. STEWART,

223 Church Street, Philadelphia, Penna.



Miss F. E. Poole, teacher of the banjo, mandolin and zither, Great Bend, Kansas, writes:

"The *Thoroughbred Banjo* and Case arrived all right yesterday. I have tried many makes, but this suits me entirely. It is very fine."

R. A. Schiller, St. Paul, Minn., writing under date of Jan. 30, says:

"Please change the address for JOURNAL to this city. I have been located here about six weeks, and in starting a new club and advertising my business, it has taken so much of my time that it was impossible to write you sooner. I am anxious to hear how the last great Banjo Concert came off. I still have my \$60.00 Stewart Orchestra Banjo that I purchased of you five years ago, and it seems to be getting better all the time. I will advise all pupils and teachers that want to progress to buy a good instrument—and that is a Stewart Banjo—as it is a hard matter for the best player on earth to bring out good music from a poor instrument. Beginners come to me every day and say 'I will buy a cheap banjo to start with.' That is where so many make a mistake. If they had purchased a good one at the start, they could and would have advanced again as much."

A correspondent in Toledo, Ohio, writes:

"In a music store here they have a banjo in the window, marked S. S. Stewart, Model Professional. I went in to see it, and the clerk said it was a Lyon and Healy, 'modeled' after Stewart. I gave him a 'call down,' but it had no effect on him, as he still displays it so marked."

Those purchasing Stewart Banjos should take care to look for the trade mark, name and number, which is placed upon each genuine STEWART BANJO. Others may copy the model of the Stewart,—and the act of doing so proves that they consider the Stewart Banjo the leading instrument,—but they have no right to offer such copy for sale as a Stewart Banjo. They should place a placard upon their goods bearing the following words: "Canned Goods, designed after the genuine S. S. Stewart, but cheaper; come in and take a look."

John Davis, the well-known teacher of Springfield, Mass., expresses his opinion of his new *Thoroughbred Banjo* in a few words. He says: "It is the best one I ever owned, and that is saying a good deal."

F. L. Stuber, the photographer, of South Bethlehem, Pa., has a young son, who is already known as the "Boy Wonder" in that section, owing to his manipulation of the banjo strings.

J. D. Ramos, of Philadelphia, has been coming to the front of late as a banjo soloist.

It is an honor now to be known as a banjo player. Be a good one.

Parke Hunter, Danville, Ill., writes:—

"The banjo, style 10½ inch, special, was duly received in good condition and more than comes up to expectations. As I have seen several of your banjos, I knew that the finish would be first-class, but the tone was a surprise to me. It has the prettiest tone I ever heard, and is more powerful than I thought a banjo of this size could be made."

"You certainly make the banjo."

Charles Schofield, the well-known banjoist, wrote lately from Independence, Iowa, reporting himself in good health and spirits, and stating that he still used a Stewart Banjo.

use for fifths when it proved to be a first string that was false.

We called on a number of banjo teachers during our stay in New York City; among them we met some who were legitimate teachers, but the majority (and a large one at that) taught by "simplified method." We managed to hear some of their pupils play, both those who learned by note and those whom we call "simpletons." Those who played by note were able to play over some of the music we had with us, but the "simpletons" did not know whether our music was written in 6-8 time or 2-4, nor did they know whether it was to be played in the key of "A" or in "Y." The key of A is the same to those people as the key of "T." We hadn't much use for those people, some dropped them. I forgot to mention that one of them had what he called a very fine banjo, saying that "it knocked Stewart's all silly." I looked for the maker's name on the instrument, but alas! there was none. I learned afterward that it was an imitation banjo. It was not an imitation Stewart, but looked to me something like a \$4.50 "store tub." I think in Boston they give away one of these banjos (?) to every purchaser of six quarts of beans.

ONE OF THE CLUB.

NEW MUSIC

BY E. H. FREY.

PUBLISHED BY S. S. STEWART

"Dress Parade," Grand March,

Guitar Solo35

"Forget-Me-Not," Grand Valse de Concert

Guitar Solo40

Minstrel Clog,

For Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo..... .35

Overture, "La Petite,"

For Mandolin and Piano..... .50

For Mandolin and Guitar50

Part for Second Mandolin..... .25

For Two Mandolins and Guitar..... .75

Prof. Frey's music is so excellent and well-known, that there is little need of praising these new additions to his already large list of compositions. They are all excellent.

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTY-FIRST LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



In my last letter I mentioned several instances in which large profits had been realized on the sales of banjos and pianos. Some of my readers may have imagined that profits on these instruments must be excessively large. This is by no manner of means the case in first-class instruments, and I had reference to the factory made banjo, and the "Stencil" piano only. After the death of the late James W. Clarke, whose banjos at one time were very popular among professional players, I found imitations of his banjos in pawn shops. They were such close imitations that it took a person familiar with the details of his banjo to detect the counterfeit. They were sold for less than half the price asked by Clarke. The maker of some of these imitations told me they cost about six dollars to get up. The last time I saw Clarke he wanted to sell me one of his banjos, and offered it to me for forty dollars. He told me that he never sold one for less than fifty dollars, and even at that figure he made barely a living at it, and I believed him. Any one who ever knew Clarke must be aware of the fact that he never made much money out of his banjo business. It is the same with the legitimate banjo maker all the world over. If he has a reputation, he guards it jealously, and in the materials out of which he makes a selection for, say, a dozen banjos, I venture to say, he throws aside an astonishing amount of material that he considers worthless in the making of a first class banjo. It is different in the "banjo factory." Everything, good, bad and indifferent, is worked up closely and quickly, by machinery. Not so with the maker who has a world wide reputation that has been gained only by the closest application and the strictest attention to the minutest details in the making of a strictly first-class banjo. The latter, even after having gained his reputation, has to compete with rival manufacturers, and must content himself with a small profit on any single instrument, which would not be worth one's while to worry over. It is only after years of patient labor for the best

interests of his patrons, that the banjo maker is rewarded with a steady demand for his instruments; when he is in daily receipt of a number of orders, the profits in the aggregate amounting to a matter worth working for. So it is with the piano maker who is desirous of building for himself a reputation. He uses nothing but the best selected material, for which he pays the highest price. Not so with the man who makes the "stencil" piano, or "factory" banjo. These are made for the general trade, and are scattered broadcast over the land without regard as to their quality; this does not enter into the question. These men aim mainly at the quantity they can produce and dispose of.

I am glad to see that Stewart has designed a banjo to take the place of the banjeaurine. I have often wondered why this was not done long ago, but never said anything, for the reason that the making of banjos is not in my line and had I suggested any innovation I might have been laughed at for my pains. "Necessity is the mother of invention." It is only a few years since I became the owner of a Stewart Banjeaurine; before that, when I had any young pupils, I always started them on a ten inch or smaller banjo. As they progressed and grew older I gave them a larger instrument, just as many of our violin teachers start young beginners on a half or three-quarters size violin; some use even a quarter size, but I never thought there was much music in such an instrument even for a beginner. Some years ago I had several young pupils on the banjo, and found one of them "outgrowing" his banjo. I therefore got him a larger size, or rather let him use my banjo at first. I usually played with my pupils, and as I had but one large banjo at hand, I took the small one and played it, at first tuning it to the large instrument. This made the strings on the small banjo very loose, and therefore very unsatisfactory in tone. I began by tuning the strings on the smaller banjo higher, playing my parts on it as many degrees lower as I was tuning it higher. I kept on experimenting until I had tuned the small banjo a fourth higher than the larger one, so that when the large banjo was playing in A major, the small one was in E major. If the large banjo was being played in D major, the small one was played in A major. The reader can imagine my surprise upon receiving my first banjeaurine and found that the tuning and tones were identical with the small banjo I had been using. As I said before, I felt backward about making the suggestion, but now that Stewart has "started the ball a rolling," I would advise players who use a banjeaurine to try a ten-

inch banjo (improved with an extension fingerboard, as Stewart has it), tuned to the same pitch to which he has tuned his banjeaurine. All players, who play upon both a banjo and banjeaurine, know how awkward it is to change from one to the other; although one soon becomes accustomed to it, the player will find that the change from an eleven, or even a twelve inch banjo, to a ten inch banjo, is almost imperceptible. The greatest objection I have found to the banjeaurine has been, after having used an ordinary size banjo, then to change to a banjeaurine. In rapid passages the player will find that notes or chords in the higher octaves are more difficult of execution than if the head of the banjeaurine were smaller. I think it will pay leaders of banjo clubs to investigate the capabilities of the small and large rim banjeaurines. In late numbers of the *Journal* I have seen remarks concerning the tuning of different performers, some tuning the third string to G, others to A, &c. What would the players of the present day think if they heard a banjo played with the third string tuned to E, or even to D, as it was twenty-five or thirty years ago. True, we used much thicker strings then, a violin D for third, violin A for second, violin E for first and fifth, and a guitar D or violoncello A (gut) for fourth. I would ask the reader to string his banjo in this manner, then tune the third string to E. I will guarantee the experimenter will not recognize his improved modern banjo, but will be ready to acknowledge that we "old-timers" stood on slippery ground when we fought to have the banjo recognized as a musical instrument. It took time to develop, but I feel fully repaid for the part I have taken in the fight to place our favorite instrument in the very front rank of musical instruments where it belongs, and where it is bound to remain. I cannot remember when or who was the first banjo player to tune his banjo a third higher than it was at first intended that it should be tuned. Nearly, if not quite thirty years ago, I played banjo solos with piano and orchestral accompaniment. When playing with an orchestra I would tell the performers in what key I had my banjo tuned, and in what key they must play to accompany me, but in so doing they always "ground" or "vamped" along with me. As I changed the tuning of my banjo frequently and had no regularly arranged music for either banjo or orchestra, my playing might more properly be called an amusement or experiment. Not so when playing with piano accompaniment. I transposed readily at sight and amused myself with playing the melodies of

songs, with piano accompaniment, or the violin part in a violin and piano duet. I usually tuned the banjo in the key in which I desired the piano part to be played, and then transposed the banjo part accordingly. In this manner I got into the habit of tuning my banjo in G Major, which threw the banjo into the natural key of C major, I then transposed the melody a third lower and had my accompanist play the accompaniment in the key in which it was written. I never consulted with any one as to the key in which the banjo should be tuned when playing in combination with other instruments, and never heard any one play a banjo with any accompaniment. Therefore, I was a little surprised when I came east and heard a banjo played with full orchestral accompaniment, to find that the performer was playing in the same key in which I had been accustomed to tune my banjo, when playing with an accompaniment. I do not know how it came about, but suppose it "just happened so." I shall never forget that among the first pieces I ever arranged for the banjo with piano accompaniment, and the parts for which I arranged was "Der Kleine Wildfang" Galop, by Faust. That was between twenty-five and thirty years ago, and I distinctly remember the satisfaction it gave me to think that I had succeeded in "putting down in black and white" a piece of music that could be played upon the banjo and have an accompaniment that could be played by any one understanding musical notation. I will confess, however, that I was greatly worried over the fact that the parts had been written in different keys, and had my doubts as to whether it would ever be a success. From this beginning I "branched out," and as I had no one to satisfy but myself, I soon had quite a respectable collection of banjo and piano duets. Whenever I played I was sure to have a large and appreciative audience. This gave me encouragement, so that from the simple pieces I had been playing, I arranged the most difficult I could find for banjo and piano. The matter of arranging music for all sorts of combinations soon became a mania with me, and I did not stop until my collection ran up into hundreds of pieces. All this time I felt backward about letting musicians know the fact that the banjo sounded best when tuned higher than it was intended music for it should be written. I felt then that the concert pitch of the banjo should be changed, but had not the courage to come out boldly and advocate the change. At that time I was almost certain that any controversy over the banjo would only tend to make its

enemies more bitter and determined against its elevation. There had not been so many instruction books or music published for the instrument at that time, and if there was to be a change in the pitch, that was the time to make it. Three or four of us might have accomplished it without trouble. The opportunity was allowed to pass and we have the present system of tuning. I cannot say who the originator of the practice to tune the banjo a third higher was, but I certainly never heard a banjo played in that manner until several years after I commenced playing my pieces in A and E major, with the banjo tuned a third higher and the piano parts written in C and G major. For several years when playing the banjo in orchestra I always kept two banjos with me, one tuned in A and E major, the other in C and G major. Of course, when playing the latter, I transposed the parts that I had to play. I have taught hundreds of pupils and have invariably advised them to play songs with piano accompaniment, tuning the banjo to C and G major, and transposing the melody at sight to the proper key, or rather transposing the melody as many degrees lower as the banjo is tuned higher than the "banjo concert pitch." The tolerable player will be pleased to see how rapidly he or she will improve in the transposing. The matter of transposing from one key to another is a stumbling block to many ambitious amateurs. I have very often heard them say "I can play ordinary pieces at sight, but when it comes to transposing a simple melody I am entirely lost." With proper application it is simple enough and easily learned. I would give some examples as to how I have succeeded in teaching pupils in a very short time the rules of transposition, but fear I have already encroached upon too much of friend Stewart's valuable space. Perhaps in some future letter I may dwell upon this subject, and hope if I do, to be the means of enabling some of my readers at least to overcome a (to them) seemingly insurmountable obstacle, but which, in truth, if properly treated, is as easy as "rolling off a log." I find that I have digressed materially from the subject I intended to write about when I first commenced this letter, but hope I have not tired the reader with my erratic wanderings. I feel that the patient reader will understand that my letters are not studied efforts, but merely a chronicle of events concerning the banjo, as they occurred years ago and as they come to my mind when writing these letters.



Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTY-SECOND LETTER.

BY A. BAUR



I have many inquiries as to my opinion with reference to the best kind of a head to put on a banjo, and how to put it on. This same question asked of ten different players of prominence, would bring forth as many different answers. Some prefer the all white head, others the clear head, others still prefer the clouded head. In my experience, I have found that a head can, by chemical process, be made perfectly white, or by the use of acids, can be made clear. Either method, I should say, would practically ruin a good head.

A clouded head cannot be made so by either process. An attempt to do so might be made, but the white and transparent parts would be so unevenly blended that the casual observer would at once detect it. It would require one more expert in the examination of a head to detect the use of chemicals in the finishing, or rather clearing, to make it transparent; or bleaching it to such an extent as to make it all white.

While it would be an easy matter for one of experience to discover any defects, it would not be so easy for any amateur to select one suitable for his purposes. And as it is of the utmost importance that a good head should be selected, I would advise those not capable of doing so to visit a responsible dealer and leave it to his judgment. I know from experience that the conscientious dealer will lay in a stock of heads, when he gets an order, and select the best head out of his stock; and will continue doing so with each succeeding order until, after having culled over his stock a number of times, he will find himself with a number of unsalable heads on hand, which he must lose. So it is with all materials.

Stewart orders his heads in large quantities, and buys the best the market affords, or money will buy; yet, at the end of the year he finds himself with some on hand which he would not put on a banjo, or sell; therefore, he must lose whatever they have cost him.

Many heads will be found thin at one side. It is usual to put the thin part next the tail-

piece. I always select one of moderate thickness and even as possible throughout. A thick head is not good; neither is one that is too thin. All prominent performers do not employ the same method in putting on a head. Some think it best to soak it thoroughly, while others prefer to put it on nearly dry. I have known some to dampen the edges, leaving the centre perfectly dry; I have seen others soak the head in water for several hours, and have heard some say that they put on a head dry, using a damp cloth where the head was turned under the flesh hoop, letting it get just damp enough to enable them to turn the edges round the wire ring and under the flesh hoop. The most satisfactory method I have yet found, is to dampen a towel, then lay the head upon it and roll them up together; allowing it to remain in the towel until it becomes moderately damp. By doing this I find that it can be more evenly stretched, and gives better satisfaction. I then tighten it by degrees, using a wrench with moderation until I get it to its proper place; this takes several days. When I get the head where I want it, I use my wrench until I think another half turn will surely break the head.

Years ago we did not have the advantages enjoyed by the banjo player of to-day. We could not go to the dealer and make a selection. Very few dealers kept a stock on hand.

I had a favorite tanner who made heads for me. They were crude at best. There was no improved machinery to dress the hides down with; they were scraped by hand, and it was easy to distinguish the wrong from the right side. Nowadays it is almost impossible to tell which side ought to be turned out. Then, the heads were very thick and required considerable "soaking" to make them pliable enough to handle; and the putting of it on the banjo was the largest part of a day's work.

The reader will laugh when I tell him my experience in putting on my first banjo head.

I had gone to the tanner's and given him elaborate instructions as to the requirements of a first-class head—not forgetting to tell him what age the calf should be to insure its hide making a suitable head. It was then thought the younger the calf the better the head. If one had the good fortune to secure one from a prematurely born calf, then the head was supposed to be the acme of perfection. Well, after much trouble and consultation with the tanner, I received what was supposed to be the best calfskin ever turned out of that tannery. I took it home and anxiously awaited the coming of night,

when alone and unhampered I could prepare the head.

I started a roaring fire and put on a kettle of water. After it came to a boil, I took it off the stove and put the head into the hot water. I then sat down and took the brackets off the banjo. As I had no wrench, I used a pair of plyers; this took me, as near as I can recollect, about an hour. I then fished the head out of the still hot water. Of course it had been thoroughly cooked and fell all to pieces. My disgust at the outcome is indescribable, and I attributed the cause to everything but where it belonged. I blamed the tanner for being a rogue; I blamed the calf for having had some sort of a disease that had ruined its hide; I blamed the water, because it was well water that might have become impregnated with lime; and I blamed myself for not having used spring water. However, I went to the tanner the next morning and related my experience; his only consolation was, "why any fool might have know that," but he didn't "allee samee." When he gave me the head I told him just what I intended doing—hot water and all. He thought it an excellent idea.

He made me another head; I took it home and put it in a pail of cold water, where I left it to soak *for a week*. When I took it out it was in nearly the same condition the other one had been, with the exception that this one pulled apart when I got it about half on the rim. I got another head, which I let soak *two days and nights*, and got it on all right.

I have put on hundreds of heads since then. After getting started it did not take me long to learn that it did not take many more *minutes* to put on a head properly than it had *days*, when I had not yet learned how.

The banjo player of to-day has the benefit of the pioneers in the business, whose dearly bought experiences have materially lessened the labor of the newcomer.

I have before me Nos. 2 and 3, Vol. I, of *The "Jo,"* a journal published in London, in the interests of the banjo, mandolin and guitar. In No. 2 the editor advises a correspondent to try pure spirits of turpentine in cleaning a banjo head. I wonder if the editor ever tried it himself. Quite likely. A man who would advise the use of a "zither banjo" (so called), is liable to do anything. I would about as soon put the banjo head in the fire as to use turpentine on it.

These fellows in England have an original way of doing business. To begin with, they call a banjo a "jo," and a banjo player a "joist;" and to distinguish between the legitimate American banjo and the foreign mon-

strosity, they call the one the "ordinary, or gut 'jo," and the other the "zither banjo." The latter I spoke about in a former letter, and do not deem it worth while to give it any farther than a passing notice.

One writer in *The 'Jo* says: "The only practical difference between the Dobson and the zither, is that the vellum head of the latter is ingeniously placed so as to be flush with the rim of the outside case."

This proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the writer knows nothing about the subject of which he is writing. In a previous paragraph he speaks of the "sounding board at the back in the Dobson banjo." This identifies it with the Dobson closed back affair, which, as the greenest amateur is aware, was years ago relegated to the pawnshop and rubbish pile, and acknowledged a miserable failure by its inventor. The writer also says: "Of course there are a few clever performers who still use the gut 'jo, as they find it more suitable for the unusually rapid execution of their musical fireworks, etc."

I doubt very much if this champion of the "zither banjo" ever saw a banjo as made by a capable American workman, or heard one played by an American player.

I have had many years experience handling banjos, and have seen all the different styles; and have carefully examined the so-called "patent improved, independent fly-back, split-second with automatic recording attachment banjos," and can assure this would be Solomon of the 'Jo that the banjo is an American instrument, pure and simple.

Aside from its origin, there can be no possibility of a doubt that it was improved and brought to its present state of perfection in America, and by Americans; neither can there be any doubt that the American player is away and out of sight of his English competitor.

It makes one tired to read such silly twaddle as is set forth in No. 2 of *The 'Jo*. In speaking of a piece of banjo music advertised in its columns, it says: "The fact that H. R. H. the Prince of Wales has favored the composer with his acceptance of a copy, should in itself be sufficient proof of its excellence."

Bosh! This is all toadyism. What does H. R. H. know about banjo music? The fact of his having accepted a piece of banjo music from the composer would make it no better or worse. My boy, only a little over eight years old, knows more about banjos and banjo music in one day than the Prince of Wales will know in the next quarter of a century. Yet, I would not consider my boy at all, if I were selecting a piece of music.

I had a little experience once with a banjo

player "from over the water." I called at a certain music store for orders, and was handed a note requesting me to call without delay at a hotel, patronized principally by professional people. With the note was enclosed the card of a noted London specialist. When I called at the hotel, and had met the party who wished to see me, we went to his room. He told me that he had an engagement and intended introducing the banjo in his act, but, before doing so, he wanted my opinion with reference to his playing. His banjo had been made in London, and was what *The 'Jo* calls an ordinary "gut 'jo." It was very ordinary, indeed. In fact, about as poor an imitation of a banjo as I had ever seen. Well, after a long time spent in changing strings, tightening head, tuning, etc., he played several pieces for me. It was about like the banjo, only a little more so—so much so, in fact, that I felt backward about saying anything for fear that I might hurt his feelings. He told me: "In London I am considered a fine player, and receive frequent encores."

As I had been asked to be candid, I told him if he could get along with his act without introducing the banjo I thought it would be just as well. He seemed hurt, and dwelt upon the fact that "on the other side he was considered a fine player." I then told him that I had a lot of pupils who could play "all around him;" that the banjo had made wonderful strides in America, and that the day of the "nigger banjo player" had passed, never to return. He did not play the banjo, and I supposed, at the time, that he took my advice and "dropped" the banjo part of his act.

So it is with about all the foreign banjo players I have ever seen or heard. They have no idea of the requirements of a banjo player. A man's capabilities as a banjo player are estimated according to his muscular development. A banjo is there played by main strength, and the interest in the instrument is kept up by teachers exhausting their energies in inducing pupils to continue the practice of the instrument.

I notice in No. 3 of *The 'Jo*, in the column "Editorial Greetings," the writer says: "*Fortunate is the teacher who can say that the present month shows as many pupils on his books as were there when the last issue of The 'Jo was the topic of conversation in the studio. This is a fact none the less deplorable than it is true, and we should be glad for the sake of a large army of teachers that it were not so.*"

This does not speak well for *The Jo*. I imagine, if its publication is continued, that, according to its own statement, banjo players will be very scarce in England by the

time a dozen numbers of *The 'Jo* have been issued. I think the best plan the promoters of this sheet could adopt would be to discontinue its publication. Before doing so, however, I would advise them to acknowledge to the banjo playing public that the "*Banjo and Guitar Journal*" is the best and only paper published in the interest of the guitar and banjo player. In its columns the seeker after knowledge cannot fail to find that which will benefit him or her in the study of either banjo, guitar or mandolin. How it would make us smile to read in the *Journal* that there would be a "Grand 'Jo, 'Tar and 'Lin Concert," at which some of the most celebrated 'joists, 'tarists and 'linists of the day would appear.

I cannot imagine how those people ever got it into their heads to call a banjo a 'jo, and a banjo player a 'joist. As for the "zither banjo" (so called), I do not object to its being called a 'jo; it certainly is *not* a banjo. It does not resemble it in any manner, excepting shape. This certainly would not entitle it to rank with the legitimate banjo, to which it is inferior in every detail; but it is a little like the factory banjo—it must have its champions. In my opinion the players in England are not so much to blame for advocating the use of the zither banjo. Most of them never saw a first-class banjo, and of course could not be expected to know that the American banjo is so much superior to that of foreign make that they will not stand comparison in the same day.

THE MUSIC IN THIS NUMBER.

In this, our Mid-Summer number, we give fourteen pages of choice music, including Mr. Armstrong's able article on "Divided Accompaniment," and Mr. Newton's "Practical School of Harmony for the Guitar." It is quite likely that both of these works will be brought to conclusion in our next issue, No. 84; after which they will be issued in book form, complete.

It is not likely that guitarists have ever had such a work as Newton's presented to them before this serial publication appeared in the *Journal*, and it is earnestly hoped that its appearance in book form may assist many—both teachers and amateurs—in acquiring a better knowledge of this beautiful instrument, the guitar.

Mr. Armstrong's work, too, is a novelty, and has been undertaken with a view towards perfecting banjo and guitar musical organizations. It will be better appreciated as banjo clubs become more and more advanced.

The musical selections, comprising Lillian

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTY-THIRD LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



As I have previously stated in these letters—should I undertake to reply personally to all the inquiries I receive concerning the banjo, it would necessitate the employment of expert stenographic clerks. I make it a rule to reply to all letters received, but cannot answer all questions by mail that are asked. Of course, I could reply to every person writing me if I answered all letters in their order; and I have a number of times determined to do so; but when a letter gets to be six or eight months old I feel backward about replying, and think it better not to reply at all than to be considered tardy in answering correspondence. I would like, however, to impress upon the readers of my letters, that were it in my power to do so, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to write each and every correspondent a long letter, answering fully and in detail, every question asked of me.

I must, like the rest of you, strive to “keep the wolf from the door,” and with this object in view, I write personal letters to all that I consider the most important inquiries, for enlightenment. I am glad to see so much interest being taken in the advancement of the banjo, and I am convinced that the “seekers after knowledge” are of the class that take no stock in learning to play the banjo “by ear,” if such a thing is possible of accomplishment. I have received quite a number of inquiries concerning the degree of rapidity in which certain movements should be executed. As most of these persons seem to be sincere, I would say to them, that in my opinion, the easiest way to gain knowledge in that direction would be to obtain a *Metronome* and a good musical dictionary. With these two articles at hand, I do not see how it would be possible for the beginner not to learn readily the *tempo* of any strain or piece. Without time, any musical composition is a meaningless jumble; of course, with *time*, must be taken *expression*, which is the quality in a composition or performance which appeals to our feelings; taste or judgment displayed in rendering a composition

and imparting to it the sentiment of the author. Without these two essential points, the performer had better not be heard.

I had a letter a short time since, in which the writer asked me the meaning of “*Andante quasi allegretto*.” The definition of this Italian phrase is “an *andante* nearly as rapid as *allegretto*.” Now, as “*allegretto*” is defined as “rather light and cheerful, but not as quick as *allegro*,” it would indicate that the strain marked “*andante quasi allegretto*,” should be played somewhere between *andante* and *allegro*, and as there is no *allegretto* movement marked on a metronome, the performer must be guided by the scale which is marked on the metronome. I take it for granted that most of my readers have seen a metronome, but fearing that some of them may be at a point where such an instrument is not obtainable, I will describe one as plainly as possible: a metronome is a pyramid shaped box, containing a simple clock movement, with a pendulum standing upright, instead of swinging below, as is usually the case with a clock movement. In the front part, or face of the metronome, a scale is placed. This scale is numbered from forty, which is the slowest degree of time in the one now before me; down to two hundred and eight, which is the fastest; in front of this scale the pendulum is placed. To the pendulum is attached a movable slide, or gauge, as some would call it.

On the scale are also marked the different kinds of time beginning at the top with the slowest, and ending at the bottom with the fastest, in the following order: *Largo*, meaning “a slow and solemn degree of movement;” next is *Larghetto*, “a time not quite so slow as that denoted by *Largo*,” then *Adagio*, “a very slow degree of movement, although not the slowest; requiring much taste and expression;” next in order is *Andante*, “a movement in moderate time, but flowing steadily, easily and graceful;” we next have *Allegro*, “quick, lively, a rapid, vivacious movement, the opposite to the pathetic;” lastly is *Presto*, “quickly, rapidly.” These terms are often modified, both as to time and style, by the addition of other words. On the scale before referred to, *Largo* runs from forty to seventy; now should the performer wish to play a part in the slowest and most solemn degree of movement, he would move the slide attached to the pendulum, up to forty on the scale, set the pendulum in motion, and as each movement of the pendulum from left to right, or right to left causes a click, the time can be easily kept. Metronomes with bells can also be obtained. By a simple device

the bell is made to ring on the accented parts of the measure, as *Largo* is comprised in the scale at any point between forty and seventy, and as seventy is the slowest degree of the *Largo*, the other points in the scale are used in the different modifications of the term, as “*Largo Andante*,” “*Largo Assai*,” “*Largo Ma Non Troppo*,” “*Largo in poco*,” &c. *Larghetto* comprises the scale between seventy and one hundred, and would naturally include the different modifications of the term by the addition of other words or terms. “*Adagio*” comprises the scale between one hundred and one hundred and twenty-six, and is subject to the same modifications as the other terms. “*Andante*” is marked between one hundred and twenty-six and one hundred and fifty-two, while *Allegro* runs from one hundred and fifty-two to one hundred and eighty-four; between these two movements we have *Allegretto* which is defined “rather light and cheerful but not as quickly as *Allegro*,” and would therefore be a slow *Allegro*, or rather fast *Andante*. “*Presto*” runs from one hundred and eighty-four to two hundred and eight on the scale.

There are very many modifications in the above terms, from *Larghissimo*, “extremely slow” to *Presto Assai*, “very quick, with the utmost rapidity.” These different degrees of time or execution can be more readily learned from a musical dictionary. I see no reason why the modern banjo player should not become familiar with all the different musical terms. To render the class of music that is now being played upon the banjo, it is about as necessary to play with expression, as it is to play by regular musical notation. It has become a fixed fact, that he who wishes to “keep up with the procession” must study music in all its details. With the man who plays “by ear,” it does not make so much difference. It is all guess work with him, anyway, and the time is not far distant when he will not be heard of at all. Many of these persons who pretend to be “masters” of the banjo, and advocate the use of the “simple method,” or who play “by ear,” have not the remotest idea of what is meant by expression as applied to the rendering of a musical composition. Take, for instance, the “*Adagio*” movement from the “*Sonata Pathetique*,” by Beethoven; it is in 2-4 time and is marked “*Adagio Cantabile*,” signifying “a very slow degree of movement, although not the slowest, requiring much taste and expression—“In a melodious, singing, and graceful style, full of expression.” The entire movement is marked “*Sostenuto*,” denoting that the notes are to be held their

full duration, which is directly contrary to what is done by most players who play nearly all passages "*Staccato*," meaning "distinct, detached, separated from each other." Nearly every measure in the movement referred to, is embellished with expression marks—such as *mf.*, *sf.*, *cresc.*, *dolce*, *decresc.*, *P.*, *PP.*, *rall.*, &c., &c.

The reader can readily see how utterly impossible it would be for one without a knowledge of music to play a movement like the one mentioned, with any degree of perfection or even satisfaction, while to a cultivated ear, the omission of expression would be worse than misery. It will be found true that the cultivated musician will always be pleased to hear a musical composition properly interpreted, no matter what instrument may be used; but he will not tolerate anything in the musical line which is so full of errors, that even the most unmusical has no difficulty, in detecting. I had a letter a short time since, in which the writer asked the question, "How can I learn to play in the English key? I have several pieces but cannot play them, because I have mastered the American system."

This is a very easy matter; simply play the pieces a third lower than written. I have never yet had any difficulty in playing any piece I have ever seen in the English key, and I have about made up my mind that they do not publish anything over there that is at all difficult, or for that matter worth trying over. When I have a piece of music in the "English Key," which is C, I just transpose it at sight to A. As my banjo is tuned in C, it is "as broad as it is long." They call it C, while I call it A, which is "allege samee," as long as my banjo is tuned in their key. Some may say, as I have heard hundreds say before; "But I cannot transpose music." To these persons I would say, learn to do so at once. You will be surprised to see how quickly it is learned. I have always made it a rule to make my explanations to pupils as plain and simple as possible, and in the matter of giving instruction to one, as to how to transpose a piece of music, I would go about it something in this wise—"Should you wish to transpose a piece of music from the key of C Major, to the key of A Major, count the number of semi-tones from A to C, and drop or write your notes as many semi-tones lower as there are semi-tones between the key from which you are transposing to that in which you propose to write the piece. For example, A is one; A Sharp is two; B is three; and C is four. Therefore, in transposing a piece from C to A Major, you would write your notes four

semi-tones lower than they are in the key of C, taking care to count the degree of the staff on which the note stands, and also the one in which you propose to place it." For example, again—"Should you be transposing a piece from C to A Major, and have E Flat in the fourth space—as E Flat is D Sharp, you would count thus: E Flat is one; D is two; C Sharp is three, and C Natural is four, and write your E Flat down to C Natural, follow this rule throughout the piece, and you will come out all right."

This is about as simple, and in as few words as I can put it. I have never had any trouble when pupils have followed these instructions. They must have grasped the idea readily, for I have had a number who are now successful teachers and performers. Some of them transposed their own music after the first lesson. Should a person desire to transpose a piece from D Major to A Major, the same rule would apply, counting A, one; A Sharp, two; B, three; C, four; C Sharp, five, and D Natural, six—and write notes six semi-tones lower. It is very often the case, at least I have found it so, that a part for the piano is in the key of E Flat Major, or three Flats, as it is commonly called. The banjo player desires to play the piece in E Major, or four Sharps; as E Flat, is one and E Natural, two, the notes should all be raised two semi-tones, taking care to include the note from that degree of the staff from which you are transposing, to that degree to which you are transferring the note. As A Major, three Sharps, and E Major, four Sharps, are the natural keys of the banjo, it would not be necessary to rewrite pieces in three and four Flats. For example—Should the reader have a piece in three flats, or more properly speaking, in E Flat Major, and wish to transpose it to E Major, or four Sharps, all that would be necessary to do would be to imagine the three Flats as being four Sharps, and play all the Flats occurring in the piece as Naturals, all the Naturals as Sharps, and all the Sharps as Double Sharps. If the piece should be in A Flat Major, or four Flats, the performer would imagine the signature as A Major, or three Sharps, and play the notes throughout the piece the same as indicated for the key of E Flat Major. The reader will understand that as the notes are read on the same degree of the staff as they stand in the original key, all that is necessary to be done is to read the Flats as Naturals, the Naturals as Sharps, and the Sharps as Double Sharps. If the learner will only devote a little time each day to transposition, he will be surprised how easily and quickly it is learned.

Since I began to play the banjo, I cannot say how many times I have been asked the question, "Do you rest the little finger of the right hand on the head of the banjo?" I receive many letters asking the same question. I have never done so, and have never had a pupil that I have allowed to do it. I have my own notion about it, but I have never entered into any controversies about it. I have never had cause to change my mind; every man has the privilege of his own opinion, and I do not desire to force mine upon others. I am aware that many of our best players say that the little finger should rest on the head, and that only two fingers and the thumb should be used in picking or manipulating the strings. Their reasons are, that the third finger is not as strong as the first and second, and that by resting the little finger on the head, the performer is enabled to pick the strings with more firmness, and thus get a more distinct tone out of the banjo. I have always thought and think so yet, that the only way to strengthen the fingers is by practice. Nearly any prominent performer upon the piano will tell you that at first they had difficulty in using the third and fourth fingers as effectively as the others, yet by constant practice, they have acquired such a facility of execution and strength in the third and fourth fingers, that the best trained ears fail to detect any difference between these and the other fingers of the hands; yet we banjo players contend that we have two fingers that cannot be relied on.

In over thirty years experience, I have always used the thumb, first, second and third fingers of the right hand, and have advised and insisted upon my pupils the importance of doing the same. A performer using only three fingers of the right hand (including the thumb), cannot make a perfect chord upon the banjo, and this fact has been commented upon by musicians a number of times. I have been able, however, to convince them of their mistake. Any musical work will tell the reader that "a chord is the union of two or more sounds heard at the same time," and also that the meaning of "*Arpeggio*," is "playing the notes of a chord quickly, one after another in the harp style." Now then, if a teacher tells you that you must pick the five strings on a banjo with three fingers, resting the little finger on the head, and pick the first string with the second or middle finger, the second string with the first finger and the third, fourth and fifth strings with the thumb, and that in playing the chord of a Major A, E, A and C Sharp, you must strike the fourth string with the thumb, immediately sliding to and

picking or striking the third string with the thumb, and at the same time picking the first and second strings with the first and second fingers. I wonder how you can possibly make the chord anything than a grace note (A on the bass or 4th string) to E, A and C.

Should you wish to play this chord where it occurs in one of the works of any of the old masters, for a person who has the theory of music "at his finger ends," I would not blame him for laughing at you, and making the assertion that the banjo is not a musical instrument, and backing up his opinion with the reason that the chords cannot be properly played upon the instrument. As I before remarked, I do not care to get into a controversy with any one, nor do I care to assert that I am right, while others are all wrong; but the fact still remains, that a person playing the banjo and manipulating the strings with only three fingers of the right hand, cannot possibly play a chord of four notes "properly," unless it be an *Arpeggio* or harp cord, while on the other hand I have the evidence of hundreds of talented and world renowned musicians, that with proper practice, all the fingers of either hand can be trained to execute a passage in music with the same degree of strength or rapidity. I have been a close observer in everything pertaining to the banjo, even to the minutest detail, and particularly to this often discussed question as to whether the thumb and two fingers, or three fingers, should be used in playing the banjo, and as to the propriety of resting the little finger on the head, and will merely say—I have always used the thumb and three fingers, and where necessary in playing a chord of five notes (not played as *Arpeggios*), the thumb and four fingers, and have always made it a point *not to rest the little finger* on the head.

In my many years experience, I have never thought it advisable to change my mind. I do not care, nor do I wish to interfere with the opinions of others, but until I am convinced to the contrary, I shall continue to do, and advise others to do as I have been doing. Many will say this is a mere matter of opinion, and I am willing to let it rest at that. I know that every one cannot be right, therefore I give the results of my experience. These results have been very favorable, and until they prove otherwise, I think I am justified in adhering to my views on the subject. Every man has a right to his own opinion, and I am willing to accede that right to him. I had a practical illustration of this a short time ago. A traveling banjo player came to my office, and showed me what he claimed to be the best banjo a certain maker had ever made.

He said that he had paid seventy dollars for it. It was in a very nice leather case, and was elaborately inlaid. After playing for me, he gave it as his opinion that I had never seen a neater or heard a better toned instrument in my life. Before taking it in my hands, I noticed that the rim was warped, and when I looked at the neck I found that it was sprung forward. I told him that I had a "Stewart Universal Favorite" that I would not give for a car load of his banjos, and gave him my reasons. Before he left I had him thoroughly convinced, and could have bought his banjo and case for very little more than the case was worth, but as I would not have considered the banjo worth anything, this price would have been high for the case alone.

I merely mention this incident to show that a man does not know a good thing until he sees it. He was a man who thought he had the best banjo ever made, and did not know better until he examined mine. There are many people of the same kind in this world, and especially in the "banjo world." I am glad to see, though, that as far as the banjo is concerned, they are becoming daily more enlightened, and it is not often now that you meet a man who will tell you that the more brackets a banjo has the better the instrument is. I do not see them advertised as extensively as they once were. The 38 bracket banjo for \$6.50 has had its day. The modern banjo player has had much to do with this state of affairs. When persons go to an entertainment where the banjo is a feature, and they take a fancy to it, they look around and buy an instrument as near like the one they heard as they can get. On this account, I hope banjo performers will continue to strive to elevate the instrument. The last decade has seen a wonderful advancement in the banjo; the next will be many times greater.

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Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTY-FOURTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



I believe there is more jealousy among musicians than there is in any other business or profession. I am sorry to see this spirit so generally fostered among professional people. I have always tried, and flatter myself upon having so far succeeded, in keeping clear of this failing; and feel safe in saying that there is not a person who ever played a banjo or wrote music for it that I envied him his reputation. When I meet a player who is above the average, I take pleasure in listening to him, making a mental note of the fact that the largest part of my life has been spent in helping to do what I could towards advancing the banjo, and that my efforts in that direction have in a certain degree helped to make possible for anyone studying the instrument to be classed among musicians. If a performer's execution does not exactly suit my ideas, there is no reason why I should expect everybody else to think the same as I do. We cannot all be perfect, and I am glad to see so many performers upon the banjo "coming to the front." I have in a number of instances seen very poor players make rapid advancement, and by close application make wonderful progress in a few months. A beginner's efforts should not be despised, for he may in a few years develop into a perfect master. I was pained the other evening at what I considered a piece of boorishness. A troop was billed to appear in our opera house, and among the performers was a banjo player well known in a certain eastern state. His playing is far beyond the ordinary, but did not suit one or two ill bred persons in the audience. While the performer was coming upon the stage to respond to an encore, these persons hissed him. Of course, there were only two of them, and they, in the large audience did not amount to much; but I felt so mortified that had it not been that I was seated well in front and would have caused a commotion by so doing, I should certainly have gotten up and in the face of the audience rebuked the rowdies and then left the hall. The disagreeable incident upset me entirely; I have known the per-

former a number of years by reputation and he has known me in the same way. Before the performance I called at his hotel to see him, and took pains to tell him what a pleasant town we have and how his playing would be appreciated, etc. If this should meet his eye, and I have every reason to know that it will, for he told me that he is a constant reader of the Journal, it may be some satisfaction to him to know that the parties who acted so ungentlemanly could not tell the difference between a Cremona Violin and a fog horn, and that his really masterful performance was very favorably commented on by many of the appreciative audience, most of whom were ready to throw these two wiseacres into the street.

The late John H. Lee I think was the most unselfish person I ever met. When he was treasurer of the Madison Square Theatre, in New York, we had daily conferences in his office. Our time was mostly spent in talking about the banjo and banjo players, planning for the advancement of the former and discussing the capabilities of the latter. He never had an unkind word for anyone, and generally had on hand some scheme whereby he could assist some rising player. Many pieces bearing the names of authors who could hum, or give a mere outline of a melody that they wanted to arrange for the banjo, were almost entirely arranged by Mr. Lee. He has many times shown me outline sketches of banjo pieces, and would say, "I am arranging this for so and so, or so and so," and I have afterwards seen the pieces in sheet form, with nothing to show that Lee had ever seen them. I have known of banjo players "helping others out," but they have generally managed to have it known, so that the praise, if any, should be theirs. I have never met one so unselfishly generous as John H. Lee. Work like this has a tendency to elevate an instrument and at the same time encourages the beginner. The more we assist each other, the more good players we will have and the more popular our favorite instrument will become. There are hundreds of good banjo players and there is room for hundreds more. In the efforts of the multitude of young players who are striving to out-strip each other, the services of good teachers will be required.

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CORRESPONDENTS

Who expect to have their letters answered, should enclose stamp for return postage;—then, if the letters are not too long, we will do our best to reply to them within twenty-four hours after receipt.

Musical composers and arrangers are kindly requested NOT to send manuscripts for publication in the *Journal*.

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTY-FIFTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



Since writing my last letter my time has been so taken up with politics that I feared I should not be able to say even a few words in this issue of the JOURNAL. "Nothing succeeds like success," and as I was successful in the political campaign, I imagine that I am the wiser for it. So it is in all the different walks of life. Success always gives one courage to attempt schemes that had previously seemed impossible of accomplishment. This I find to apply particularly to the successful teacher and writer of banjo music. It keeps one busy now-a-days to "keep up with the procession," and as I have before remarked, I try to keep thoroughly posted in all matters pertaining to the banjo. What information I cannot gain through reading the different papers published in the interests of the banjo, and circulars issued by writers and publishers of banjo music, I learn through correspondence. Where there were only a dozen or so good, bad and indifferent writers of banjo music a few years ago, there are now hundreds of them, and the list is increasing daily. Like all branches of business which promise success there is a rush to secure the first place. All cannot succeed and unfortunately for the honest student many of the pieces published for the banjo are by writers who are totally unfit for the business, and who have not the slightest idea of what they are doing. It is only a question of time, and a short time at that, when these would-be writers must take a back seat. Meteor like, they come with a flash, and are soon gone. I notice that music publishers are becoming more particular as to the kind of music they publish for the banjo. It has always been the practice among music publishers to have a critic examine all music that was offered for publication, and with first class houses it was no easy matter to have a piece of music published without its being first critically examined and passed upon by the regular critic belonging to the house. Not so with banjo music, however; critics were scarce and in many instances all a man had to do was to call at a music publisher's and offer a piece of music for publication. It was generally put in press as soon as possible. In this way many publications were placed on the market that did not deserve to be classed in the list of musical compositions. This has changed very much in the last two or three years—all first-class houses now have their critics of banjo music, upon whom rests the responsibility of keeping

the list clear of trash. Notwithstanding these precautionary measures, some houses have lists of banjo music that are inferior to that which a conscientious teacher would care to place in the hands of a pupil. A little time and study will put the teacher and pupil as well in a position from which he can judge as to where he can procure the most suitable and best music. In looking over the various catalogues of music one must be guided entirely by the titles of pieces, if the author is unknown. This is a poor way at best. The poorest pieces may have the highest sounding titles, while on the other hand, the very piece you may be looking for has the simplest kind of a title. Of course every buyer must run some risks. A good plan I find to be is to purchase music of different authors. Two or three pieces of each will suffice. While the music may not be what you want, you will be fully repaid for the outlay in becoming acquainted with the style of the different writers. Not long since I received a piece of music that had been written by a banjo player, whose name was entirely new to me. I played the piece over several times, and was considerably worried over the fact that here was a writer of banjo music whose name I had never even heard mentioned, while I had taken pride in the thought that I was keeping thoroughly up to the times and everything going on in the banjo world. The piece I speak of was as well put together a musical composition as I had seen for some time, and I predict for the writer an abundance of success in the near future. But this only shows how rapidly the banjo is advancing and how hard it is for us to keep up with it. Only a few years ago, I could name every banjo player in the United States, who had any reputation at all, and I could tell how far it was from where I lived to the home of the nearest player. Now it keeps me busy to remember those who live within twenty-five miles of me. I sincerely hope that we may all live to see the banjo advanced in the future as much as it has in the last twenty years. "The world do move," not alone the world referred to by the Rev. Jasper, but the banjo world in particular, with everything connected with it. Being now out of politics, I will have the time to do so and will try to make my next letter more interesting.

THOMAS E. GLYNN,

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15 Strings, assorted (3 sets), \$1.00.

Special attention is called to our stock of Banjo Bass, or fourth strings, consisting of silver-plated and copper wire covered, spun upon the best quality white silk. Price, 10 cents per string; \$1.00 per package of one dozen.

We have also a full line of silk covered Guitar Bass Strings, **E, A and D**, at 10 cents each. Try these strings. The rough "Roman" E strings, for Guitar (or Treble E), are also carried in stock. Try them for Guitar or Violin. Price, 15 cents, or \$1.50 per dozen. The ordinary smooth Guitar E, 10 cents each, or \$1.00 per dozen.

Send to **S. S. Stewart** for your Strings, No. 223 Church Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

THE CENTURY WHEELMEN BANJO CLUB CONCERT.

This popular Philadelphia musical organization announces an attractive concert, to take place on Tuesday evening, April 23, in the new hall of the MERCANTILE CLUB, Broad Street, above Master Street, on which occasion the Banjo Club will appear in new selections; Mr. Paul Eno, in artistic banjo solos, together with other artists, among whom may be named Miss Grace Phelps, soprano; Miss Fannie Purves Barnard, alto soloist and recitationist; Mr. George Russell Strauss, baritone; Robert G. White, monologist.

The new Mercantile Club Hall will be opened to the public for the first time upon this occasion, and is conceded to be the handsomest hall in the city.

Tickets for the entertainment may be obtained in advance of any of the members, at the Century Wheelmen Club House, 1606 N. Broad Street. Prices, 50 and 75 cents. Mr. W. S. Allen, manager.

THE COURIER

(Descriptive Fantasia)

FOR BANJO AND PIANO

By THOMAS J. ARMSTRONG

This will, no doubt, become as popular as "The Voyage," by the same composer. It is free from difficult position fingering, and is very "catchy" and tuneful. Price, 75 cents.

and imaginary. If you wish to meet me in Paradise you must set the would-be historians right side up with care. The banjo was never invented, nor was it ever originated. It was simply discovered and utilized. It sprung from microbes of a peculiar nature—in the shape of “tadpoles”—which were raised and nurtured by the great scientist and musician of the middle ages, Banjoiscus Morobosus, once the ruler of No. 7 of the group, where the sweet strains of that much-abused instrument were heard 900 years before Dobb's Son discovered Manhattan Beach.

“I could produce volume upon volume of unwritten history upon this subject, but enough said. Banjoiscus Morobosus has the honor. He named it; calling it banjo, for short, and that settles it. Banjoiscus Morobosus holds a high position in Paradise—I have met him. He says, *the idea of a gourd—oh gourd, drop it—was simply a contrivance in imitation of a banjo.* The shape was always round. That is why the banjo never gets a square deal. So now, good bye. Give my love to the readers of the *Journal*, and if you run across Billy Carroll give him a “V” for noticing me on the bills. When you regain your earthly equilibrium you will find yourself in No. 7. I will give you a line to the King and if you cannot work him, you know how to work your passage home. You will learn much from him. This is all I can do for you—good-bye.”

I was again in darkness. I felt myself gently lifted. I felt the breeze up on my cheek, (I have some), I was being conveyed to No. 7, and here I am. I visited the royal museum and the collections of banjos, some dating back one thousand years, and numbered as much ahead; the most complete I have ever seen second, act 4th.

The enclosed photo of a group of them I give to the *Journal*, it being the lowest bidder. King Thimblethumper has given me a fine lot of these microbes with instructions how to use them, in return for my “Stewart,” so if I ever have the luck to get back home, I will depend on you for another. If Anatomizer McIntosh has't given me a case of “Jolly,” we will meet again.

Yours “prozactly”

Com. Jones.

Old Times Rocks Have It Out Together

By JOHN H. ANKER.

Dan Rice and Ed. Christy with “Poor Old Nelly Gray,” were sitting in “Uncle Tom's Cabin,” with “Old Jesse, the Fine Old Colored Gentleman,” “Down on the Swanee Ribber” where they met a lot of the “Old Folks at Home.” Dan Emmett, Frank Brower and Billy Birch were there with “My

Old Dad,” “Whose Foot Am a Burnin'?” enjoying E. M. Hall's “H me Sweet Home,” where old “Pic” Butler and Popsey Keenan, used to hunt “The Little Casino” in the “Cruel Slavery Days,” “Way down in Dixie.” Joe Sweeney and the Bhee Brothers well knew that “Jordan am a Hard Road to Trabel,” even Sam Pride made Jimmy Unsworth acknowledge that it is nothing like “On the Road to Brighton.”

Billy Arlington was there too, and seeing Andy Leavitt, wanted to “Catch him by the Wool,” but Lew Brimmer spoke up and said “Rise Old Napper,” because George Powers was here in the “Merry Month of May” helping John H. Carle to chase “The Lively Flea.”

“Oh Hush,” said Ed. French, if it was't for your sex I would say “Get Thee Gone, Girl”—John Turner, the “Charcoal Man” just came up from “The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane” with Charlie and Lew Morris, where they had a late supper with “Old Dan Tucker,” and asked if Horace Weston was related to “Old Jim Crow,” because Billy Carter jollied Lew Simmons “Who liked Rich Cook Shop Gravy on his Taters,” into believing that “That Young Gal from New Jersey” was clean gone on Frank Converse, because he took her to the “Camp town Races” to “See That Old Thomas Cat.”

Geo. H. Coes, that “Old Grey Goose sat smiling at the Gander,” knowing that G. Swayne Buckley was the favorite of the “Charleston Gals,” so he up and says to Dave Reed, “I'm Off for Charleston” before Jim Budworth can hire any of “The Organs on our Streets.” Nelse Seymour winked to Eph Horn, saying he's an “Arkansas Traveler” anyway and like Johnny Hogan after he gets enough of the “Hoop de Dooden do,” he will return with the “Spanish Fandango” all through his system, and he'll have to rely on Billy Newcomb and Charlie Fox to “Rock Susy Anna.”

Dick Pelham and Dad Lul, just getting over the “Hard Times,” were having them over again together when Billy Whittlock, whistled, “Don't give it up so Mr. Brown,” because Charlie Jenkins says that “Hard Times will Come Again No More” “When Johnnie Comes Marching Home.” Joe Kelly asked Sam Devere how that could be with “Hail Columbia Rightside Upside.” “Aint I Glad to Get Out of the Wilderness” said Billy Lehr, at this junction. I was just going to “Jar Down” again having just escaped from “The Knickerbocker Line” with Billy Whittlock.

Phil. J. Rice spoke up and said he thought there were some “Somebody's in the house but Dinah,” so Hipe Rumsey, remarking that as “Picayune Butler's Coming to Town,” Frank Gallagher and Ed. Wambold may as well “Hang Up the Fiddle and Bow” on Tom Vaughan's “Sweet Potato Vine.” “Oh! Jim Along Josey” said Luke Schoolcraft, you are worse than “Old Zip Coon.” You and Pete Williams were always like a “Possum Up a Simmon Tree, Raccoon on de groun.” Let Mat Peel take “Coal Black Rose” to “Mrs. Didimus Party,” while Billy Carroll the “Jinger Blue” of the profess can help “Old Bob Ridley along with the “Juba” while I entertain “Sweet Tobacco Posey” So “Sift Sand Sal,” and we'll all retire by the “Milky Way” to join Tom Briggs, for like “Old King Cole,” he was a merry old soul.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

TWENTY-SIXTH LETTER

.....BY A. BAUR.....



Much has been, and more is at present being written and said about right hand fingering in banjo playing. In a former letter I took occasion to ventilate my personal views on this subject, but I believe did not get so far as to touch upon the matter of playing repeated notes which occur on the same degree of the staff. I thought years ago that this subject ought to have been at that time written up to its fullest extent. Had the teachers then decided fully or rather more generally upon one system of fingering it would have been much better for the pupil, and doubtless would have had a tendency to advance the banjo even more rapidly than the phenomenal strides it has of late years taken. The late John H. Lee and I, had many a long talk over it when he was treasurer of the Madison Square Theatre. During a part of my daily morning calls upon him, at least part of the time was devoted to right and left hand fingering in banjo playing; the latter receiving most of our attention. We both saw the importance of a correct and uniform system of fingering, and several times were at the point of issuing circular letters to all the prominent performers, asking them to co-operate with us in our efforts to more rapidly advance the banjo by adopting, what we thought was a correct and rapid system of fingering for both hands.

This was between twelve and fifteen years ago, and we both had ample experience with a large number of well known players. We also realized the fact that the “simple method” crank was still at large and that we might both get laughed at for our pains.

I well remember Mr. Lee saying, “let it go, let it go for a while, we are ahead of the age, but it is bound to come; you and I may not live to see it, but it is sure to come.” Poor fellow, little did he think how truly he was prophesying; at least so far as he was concerned. How I wish he were living and could hear what is said about the banjo to-day. His heart was in the banjo, and many who have succeeded by having their compositions for the banjo brought before the public owe much of their success to John H. Lee. Often in that little den over the theatre stage, he has shown me manuscript copies of banjo pieces that had been sent him by the author for revision or correction. Often these would be simple melodies without chords; sometimes he would finish them up himself and sometimes we would go over them together, suggesting here and there a cutting out or adding to a measure or so; and sometimes adding a second or third banjo part. Many of these pieces I have seen published under the author's name without any credit being given to Mr. Lee. This however, made no difference; he rejoiced as much in the success of another as if it were his own.

I think our friend G. W. Gregory struck the right

chord when he determined to write the articles on right hand fingering which are now being published in the *Journal*. The only fault I find with it, is that it was not begun sooner. Mr. Farland's "National School," in which the right hand fingering is somewhat similar to Mr. Gregory's, is also an excellent work for both teacher and pupil to follow. I appreciate fully the fact that it is almost impossible to overcome faults that have been acquired by years of practice, and it is for this reason that I say these methods of fingering ought to have been made public years ago and scattered broadcast throughout the land. Some years since, the right hand fingering in pieces to be played in the banjo style was indicated by signs placed below the notes, but as this style of playing is very little used now the right hand fingering is of no benefit to a person playing in the guitar style. I stated in a former letter that I have always used the thumb, first, second and third fingers of the right hand in picking the strings, using the thumb on the fourth and fifth strings; the first finger on the third string; the second finger on the second string and the third finger on the first string. I never deviated from this system except in playing passages of repeated notes on the same string or rapid runs that occurred upon one string. In such cases I used the thumb and first finger on the fourth string; the same fingers on the third string; the thumb, first and second fingers on the second string, and the first, second and third fingers on the first string, in some passages adding the thumb to the three fingers in passages on the first string. In passages of triplets on any one string I use the thumb, first and second finger, always striking the first note of the triplet with the thumb, the second note with second finger and the third note with the first finger. The beginner will find this a little awkward at first, but a little practice daily will make it easy, and pay manifold for the time consumed in learning the movement. "There is nothing that succeeds like success," and the fact is I have always followed the above method and taught it to pupils who by their smooth and easy right hand fingering have convinced me at least, that "there is method in my madness."

Of course I do not wish the reader to think that I claim that my system of right hand fingering is the only correct one. Far from it; every man has a right to his own opinion, and I only give the result of my experience in practical tests. It is not to be expected that any one could win over to his side one who never has been taught how to finger correctly with either hand; such a person never could be convinced of mistakes even if he knew he was wrong. He would naturally think that as he had been playing thus far and usually struck a note somewhere near the time he intended to, he must be right and everybody else wrong. To such a person the methods of Farland and Gregory would be invaluable. Whoever heard of a violinist meeting with success unless he bowed properly? It is simply out of the question and utterly impossible to play the violin correctly with incorrect bowing, and the time has come when the performer upon the banjo must be just as correct in his right and left hand fingering as he is in playing a piece of music in its proper tempo; and for those who are not aware of the fact, I will say that although they may play some pieces in a fashion to suit a mixed company, even when incorrectly fingered, there are pieces that cannot be played at all upon the banjo without a correct system of fingering for both hands. Begin at once to unlearn those things which you never should have learned. You can never begin younger.

BANJO STRINGS.

Use Stewart's strings for your banjo—Send \$1.00 and get, by mail, 15 banjo strings. Be sure to write your name and address plainly in ordering strings, thereby avoiding mistakes and delays. *Single* strings for banjo, 10 cents each. (*Married* strings, it is, perhaps, unnecessary to state, are for mandolin, not for banjo.) One *full* set of banjo strings, (5 strings in all), 50 cents.

Full sets of strings may be purchased either at full moon, or otherwise.

It is more economical in all cases to buy one dollar's worth, or 15 strings, at a time, as the purchaser receives a small leather *case* with the same.

The best banjo bass, or fourth strings, may be had at \$1.00 per dozen, or 10 cents each. These are *high grade* strings in every sense of the term. Address S. S. Stewart, 221 and 223 Church St., Philadelphia, Pa.

OUR MUSIC.

The music in this issue will be found, we think, quite up to the standard: Here are "Spanish Waltz," for mandolin and guitar, by E. H. Frey; "Enterprise Waltz," guitar solo, by Miss D. I. Lynch; "Under the Roses" (polka, two-step), by the well-known banjoist, Thomas E. Glynn; and a clever, though not difficult, arrangement of "Kui-awiak" Mazourka, as a banjo solo, by J. B. Corbett, the well-known Chicago player and teacher, who forwarded the arrangement to us with a part for the guitar, but unfortunately the guitar part had to be omitted in this number on account of our lithographed music form being full. A clever galop by James E. Fish, for banjo, and another composition by E. H. Frey, have likewise been held over, owing to lack of space.

THE BIG BANJO CONCERT

to take place at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, Broad and Locust Streets, Thursday evening, January 16, bids fair to excel all other efforts of the kind, and the banjo season will be a heavy one.

ADVERTISING RATES.

A limited number of ads. will be taken in the *Journal*. Rates as follows: Ordinary ads. \$1.50 per inch space, each insertion. Under heading of "teachers," two-line cards, giving name and address, will be inserted at \$1.00 per year in advance; three line cards, \$1.50 per year. Only *teachers* can place cards in the "Teachers Columns," as that department is intended as a select directory.

BANJO BRIDGES.

Use STEWART BRIDGES on all STEWART BANJOS. These bridges are produced from the choicest selected maple stock, and are sold at the very low price of 5 cents each, or 50 cents per dozen, for the "ordinary," and 10 cents each, or \$1.00 per dozen, for the HAND-FINISHED. One of these bridges, with proper care, often lasts during several months steady use.

There is no longer a shadow of doubt that maple is the proper wood for the construction of the banjo bridge; but it by no means follows that the various clap-trap patents of one kind and another, which have been put on the market by ambitious inventors, in the shape of improved bridges, (?) have improved the bridge, except in a commercial way,—that is, RAISED THE PRICE. Use Stewart Bridges and be wise.

DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS LOADED.

The English publisher of banjo music, referred to in our last number, who reproduced Mr. Armstrong's well-known compositions, *Love and Beauty Waltzes* and *Normandie March*, without giving the composer credit, has written us that he *did not know who the composer was* at the time he had the compositions "arranged" for publication. He offers, however, to put the composer's name on his title pages when the next editions are printed.

It is a great pity for such a publisher; such a confession of ignorance, as to the authorship of well-known musical compositions in America, is a very lame excuse.

America, the home of the banjo, the birthplace of the banjo club; think of the blindness of Uncle John Bull, when he tries to set up an English School of "Zither Joes," and professes not to have known the composer of *Love and Beauty*. Oh, ye Gods! All who have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now, for Uncle John will never get in with his banjo band. *His neck is far too thick.*

PAUL ENO.

This well-known composer and arranger of music for banjo, guitar and mandolin clubs, has removed his studio, from 1427 Chestnut Street, to No. 1016 Chestnut. Banjo clubs under Eno's tuition are now very active. Eno is a *pusher*, as well as a musician.

Two of his recent compositions for clubs are just being published by us, as will be found announced in another portion of the *Journal*.

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTY-SIXTH LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



I have lately read an excellent little pamphlet, entitled "Practical Hints on Modern Banjo Playing." The author states that "as music for the instrument (the banjo,) was written in the beginning, with the bass string noted as 'A,' the notation has never been changed in this country, etc.," and in a foot-note he corrects this by saying, "Since writing the foregoing paragraph, a gentleman who has played the banjo for many years as an amateur has called my attention to the fact that the late Thomas Briggs (a banjoist of renown in his day) published his method for the banjo early in the '50's, and that according to Briggs, the bass string was tuned to G;" thus my statement that "music for the instrument was written in the beginning with the bass string noted as A would appear incorrect. As a matter of fact, it is practically correct, for Briggs Method is the only one I have ever been able to discover giving the tuning as G, so it must be regarded as an exception, and hardly to be considered, etc."

With reference to Tom Briggs having published a banjo book, the amateur is mistaken—Tom Briggs died before the method called "Briggs' Banjo Instructor" was published. I have an original copy of the book and it contains a narrative of Briggs' death. The man who wrote "Briggs' Banjo Instructor" is living to day and is known to all lovers of the banjo. While Briggs noted the bass string as "G," he, (or the writer of the book) gave a table showing the manner of tuning the banjo in any key and advising the performer to frequently change the "pitch," so that he might have a pleasing change. In this table the author of "Briggs' Banjo Instructor," says to play in the key of "A" Major, tune the third string to E, and so on through the various keys. The author of "Practical Hints on Modern Banjo Playing" is mistaken when he says that Briggs' was the only book ever published giving the tuning as "G." "Howes Practical Banjo Method" also noted the bass string as G, and there are several other banjo methods naming the strings just as they are in Briggs' Method. Nearly all these later methods, however, have been copied from "Briggs' Banjo Instructor;" at least, in so far as the rudimentary part is concerned. Music publishers, I imagine do not follow their trade for health and when they hear of a good thing they generally try to "keep up with the procession;" and when the banjo began to look up, publishers began to look 'round for some one to write books for the instrument. In doing so some of them probably employed persons who thought they knew all about the banjo. Before writing the book, the person so employed would procure a banjo book already published and familiarize himself with the scale, compass, etc., of the instrument: The most natural and easy way would then be for the writer to copy the rudimen-

tary part of Briggs', or any other instruction book, then add a few pieces and a song or two; then turn the work in as his own work and collect pay for it.

To my certain knowledge there are at least half a dozen Banjo Methods with the fourth string noted as G. I can think of but three now; Briggs, Howes and one by a prominent music writer whose name I shall not mention now, as it is not very many years since he wrote the book. There are at least three or four other books that I cannot recall at present.

It is a mistake to say that "the change to smaller instruments has been gradual, and while we have been slowly raising the pitch as the instruments were made smaller, no change has been made in the notation." In the early days of banjo playing—banjos were made *large* and *small*, as best suited the fancy of the player. Julius Von Bonhorst was a prominent player many years ago. I tried his last and best banjo once: It had such a long neck and the rim was so large in diameter that I could barely reach the natural position, while it was utterly impossible for me to stop any of the position chords correctly. I have a banjo that was made in the early sixties. It is an eleven inch rim with a nineteen inch fingerboard, or about the dimensions of our modern banjo. In the old days the banjo player used a violin D for third string; violin A for second; a violin E for first and fifth, and a violoncello A for fourth.

Such stringing as this made a vast difference in the pitch. It was discovered that thinner strings gave a more brilliant tone and banjoists began to use a heavy violin A string for third; a light A for second; an E for first and fifth, and guitar D for fourth. This was also modified by using violin A for third; heavy E for second; light E for first and fifth; the guitar D still holding its place as fourth, until an enterprising dealer in New York imported a very thin violin E, which was called banjo first and fifth. About the same time the banjo fourth was specially made for the instrument, the seconds and thirds coming in later.

Our modern banjo player would think it an imposition if he were compelled to pay fifty cents a piece for gut strings. Yet for several years I paid fifty cents each to a retailer for the best Italian gut strings for my banjo. I got to know a bit, and then bought my strings by the bundle which was considerable of a saving. I do not know and do not believe that any one else knows, by whom, when or how the banjo first came to be tuned to "A" or "C." I never sought for nor had anyone impart the information to me. I believe we all just "fell into that way of doing business." I always played my banjo with piano accompaniment, then I tuned to A. I played the melodies of songs as they were written, while the accompanist played the accompaniment as published. I also played the violin parts in violin and piano duets. When I began using thinner strings I found that they were so loose that the snapping of the strings against the fingerboard was not as agreeable as it might be. I then began to tune my banjo in *B flat*, and transposed the melodies as much lower as I had tuned my banjo higher, leaving the accompaniments to be played as written. It was an easy and natural transition from *B flat* to *C*, and to *D*, but the banjo strings as then made, were of such inferior quality that with their constant breaking I settled upon tuning my banjo in *C*, as being the most satisfactory.

At that time the whole system of notation and tuning might have been changed, but it might be

said the banjo was in the experimental stage with no one to assert with certainty as to what would be for the best interests of the instrument. There was no concert of action; every man seemed to be for himself, and in this condition of things the "boom" came. But very little music was published for the banjo and publishers in every direction suddenly became anxious to "stock up."

No man, unless he was "in the swim," can imagine what a demand for banjo music, all at once, sprang up. In a little less than five months I arranged and copied over six hundred pieces of music for publication. Since then, thousands upon thousands of pieces have been added. Not twenty years ago I prided myself upon the fact that I had a copy of every piece of music and book that had ever been published for the banjo. At about the same time, the late John H. Lee and I made a list of every known banjo player in the United States who played by note. The list was not very long either. We may have missed a few, but I can assure the reader that there were not many that we did not know, either personally or by reputation.

A few persons are worrying over the fact that the American and English pitch are not alike. I do not see any reason for uneasiness on that account. Our American pitch is firmly established. What little music is published on the other side can be easily learned by any player of average ability. It is merely a question of mental gymnastics at best; just a little transposition, as easy as two and two are four.

* * * * *

By the time this letter reaches the reader, what promises to be the best of all the concerts given by Messrs. Stewart, Armstrong and Gorton, will have come and gone. As I intend being there with eyes and ears open, I shall endeavor in the next number of the Journal to tell its readers what I saw and heard.

The Washington and Jefferson College Glee Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club paid our town a visit on Christmas Night. This Club is under the direction of Mr. F. C. Meyer, of Wheeling, West Virginia. Mr. Meyer is a gentleman in every sense of the word, and deserves much credit for the efficient manner in which he has trained the W. and J. Boys (nearly all of whom use the Stewart Banjo). The events of the evening were Mr. Meyer's Mandolin and Banjo Solos in each of which he showed his ability as a skilful artist.

A GOOD MAXIM.

When you try your Stewart Banjo don't make the mistake of putting a little bit of a tom-tit bridge on the instrument, and then saying that the banjo has lost its tone, or "sounds tinny." Remember that the banjo can't tell you what it thinks of you, if you haven't got the musical instinct to cause you to understand its voice. If you possess musical instinct, go at the thing in the right way, and with careful practice you are bound to become one of the "best in the business"—for it is written—"To him that hath shall be given." If you lack musical instinct, don't blame the banjo for it.

who were attending the annual sale of stud sheep. About two thousand, or even more, mustered in the Centennial Hall, and there was a continual hum of voices throughout, in spite of the chairman's efforts to obtain order. Numerous waiters in white attended the cravings of the inner man, without charge, and oh my! how some of them did crave. At one time, I suppose there were one thousand or more long clay church-warden pipes in full blast, giving the audience a very quaint appearance; that is, as far as we could see through the dense clouds of smoke.

We played in conjunction with the Royal Italian Mandolin Society; the whole affair was voted a great success, and no doubt the object of the gathering was attained, but I doubt whether even one eighth portion heard any of the items save that king of instruments, the Town Hall organ. Mr. Wiegand, the clever organist, receives a retainer of about \$5,000 a year, and is as accomplished as can be found. At this concert Mr. Stent played the "22d Regiment Thimble March" with an orchestra, (not banjos) which was much admired.

Mr. Stent, in August this year, held his annual Concert, and was rewarded with a splendid attendance, the whole of the reserved seats having been secured before the concert, a very flattering reward for his energy and perseverance. Several ladies played banjo solos, and Signor Pedenzana's Mandolin contributions, with an accompaniment of two guitars, by pretty girls, were much admired.

Mr. Walter Stent, who was in great form, played Mr. Stewart's difficult variations on the "Carnival of Venice," with piano accompaniment, arranged by Miss Secor; Miss Barnard, a sister of one of our club members, acting as pianist. It was a splendid performance, and they had to respond to a unanimous outburst of applause. The club selection which won most approval that night, was the "Darkies' Awakening," by Mr. Lansing, arranged for the club by our leader. We had just finished the "Darkies' Patrol" immediately before, but our friends demanded a repetition of the "Darkies' Awakening," without which they would have not been satisfied.

Among the pieces we have played successfully since we reorganized the club, are the following: "The American Parade March," "The Heroic March," "Fruhling's March," "The Gondoliers' Gavotte," "The Darkies' Dream," "Darkies' Patrol," "Darkies' Awakening," "Love and Beauty Waltzes," "Martaneux Overture," "Silver Crown Overture," "Amphion March," "Normandie March," "Heben and Sweben Schottische," "Hazel Fern Mazourka," and many others. We have in rehearsal "Bella Bocca Polka," "Manhattan Beach March," "Washington Post March," "Dandy Fifth Quickstep," "But One Vienne," and "Cupid's Realm." We have several times added the piano to the club, to aid the bass and second banjos, but care is taken that the tone of the banjos is not smothered by use of the loud pedal, which is quite in opposition to the staccato sound of the strings.

We have had printed rules and regulations and a full complement of officers; but lately we have reverted to our former free and easy method, which is far more preferable.

We have lost many members from various reasons, some having gone to the West Australian gold fields, where no doubt their Stewart Banjos help to while away the evenings in the far off bush; others have stepped in and filled the breach, and the club continues on indefinitely. You will gather from what I have written that we have been the means of assisting to raise considerable sums of money, which have been disbursed in various charitable movements; much of it has helped to smoothen the rough paths of many in distress, while no words of mine would be adequate to do full justice to the pleasure derived by members of the club.

In conclusion, as the clergy say, I trust all of our members, past and present, will be ready at the resurrection day to join that great orchestra of banjo players, who may be called upon to play the overture, written perchance by Mr. Armstrong, than whom no one at present is more capable. Reader, make an effort to be there, and bring along one of Mr. S. S. Stewart's Banjos, such as those played by the American Banjo Club in Sydney, Australia; for, according to Mr. Tom Midwood's clever caricature of St. Peter at the gate, "NO INFERIOR INSTRUMENTS WILL BE ALLOWED."

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player.

TWENTY-EIGHTH, LETTER.

BY A. BAUR.



As anticipated in my last letter, I attended the "Grand Concert and Prize Competition," at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, Pa., on January 16th last. I had promised myself so often the rare treat of being present at one of these entertainments, and as often something intervened to prevent my going, that I began to doubt whether I would ever have my wish gratified. For several days after my return it all seemed like a dream to me, as it is a matter of over four hundred miles from here to Philadelphia. It is no small undertaking to drop one's business at short notice for the purpose of getting there and back in a day or two; but having business which demanded my presence in the city, on the 15th, I left here on the evening of the 14th in the midst of a howling blizzard, fully expecting our train to be snow-bound somewhere east of this place, and after all, I would miss the concert.

I was agreeably surprised, however, after having gotten about a hundred miles of my journey behind me, I found not the least sign of snow, and our train pulled into Philadelphia on time, early on the morning of the 15th.

Having checked my baggage "through," I was unhampered on my arrival, and proceeded immediately to find a barber and a restaurant, after which I dispatched my business as expeditiously and in short order. I then made my way via trolley car to the banjo players' mecca, 221 and 223 Church Street. There I found Messrs. Stewart, Armstrong and Gorton "head over heels" in business, perfecting details for the success of the concert. If any of my readers imagine that these gentlemen had a "snap" of it, let them try it for just one concert, and I'll warrant that the most sceptical will be convinced and wish that he or she had never heard of such an affair.

Having finished the business which was the main cause of my visit to the city, I had nothing to do but sit and wait for the, to me, eventful evening of the 16th. In the meantime I had both eyes and ears open and took in about everything as it came along, and I speedily came to the conclusion that I would not put up with as much worry and fretting as fell to the lot of Messrs. Stewart, Armstrong and Gorton at this time for all the banjo players and banjos in Philadelphia, with the Academy of Music thrown in for good measure.

During the afternoon of the 15th, accompanied by Mr. Thomas J. Armstrong, I visited the Bourse, where Mr. Stewart has on exhibition a large case filled with elegant banjos, every one of which is a "work of art" in its truest sense. It is worth a trip to Philadelphia to visit the Bourse alone. There is so much to be seen there that I cannot begin to remember the hundredth part of it.

After our return from the Bourse we met that prince of good fellows, Mr. George B. Ross, and with him we went to Mr. Armstrong's cosy instruction rooms, at 1416 Chestnut Street, where several hours were very pleasantly spent. I am sorry to say that since my visit the building in which Mr. Armstrong's rooms were located, has been entirely destroyed by fire. The loss to Mr. Armstrong is irreparable, the flames having swept away everything, including much valuable MSS and other belongings, which have taken almost a lifetime to collect.

After leaving Messrs. Armstrong and Ross, my time was taken up between visiting points of interest in the city, and Mr. Stewart's place of business. On the afternoon of the 16th, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart entertained the visiting participants in the concert at an elegant luncheon, served at their pleasant home, No.

1421 Filbert Street. It was my good fortune to be an invited guest. It was an assemblage long to be remembered by those who were present. In the excitement and hurry of getting to the Academy, I forgot entirely to thank my host and his good wife for their kindness, and take this method of publicly making amends, in part at least for my seeming rudeness, which I assure Mr. Stewart, however, was not intentional. There were present at the festive board, S. S. Stewart, T. J. Armstrong, Charles N. Gorton, Loftus Armstrong, A. A. Farland, M. Rudy Heller, George Carr, of Scranton; Frank S. Morrow, of Harrisburg; Miss Ida Lee Magez and W. B. McAtee, of Baltimore, Md.; Ruby Brooks, Harry Denton and Vess L. Osman, and J. A. Silberberg, of New York; Valentine Abt, of Pittsburg; George B. Ross and myself. The manner in which the company made the good things disappear was *prima facie* evidence that the occasion was a joyous one, and that Mr. and Mrs. Stewart's labor had not been in vain. After the abundance of good things had gone the way of all good things, it occurred to every one at about the same time that the Academy of Music was the next objective point. The suggestion was immediately acted upon.

Having no preparations to make, I was earliest to reach the Academy, and had ample time to take in the situation. I made my way to the stage entrance, and found Messrs. Stewart, Thos. J. and Loftus Armstrong, Gorton and Ross already there. In a short time the members of the different clubs began to arrive in one's, two's and three's. Then it seemed as if pandemonium had let loose. Every man present was trying to tune his banjo, banjeaurine, guitar, or mandolin. Nothing short of a banjo concert could be likened unto it. My descriptive powers are inadequate to convey to the reader the faintest idea of what it was like. Mr. Paul Eno's arrival soon brought order out of chaos. He quietly and quickly made his way among the players, and soon had their instruments in tune. It was now about time for the concert to begin, and I made my way to the auditorium, where I found that a seat had been reserved for me in close proximity to the stage and performers, where I could advantageously note everything that was going on.

The house was packed from pit to dome, with an enthusiastic audience composed of the best of Philadelphia's most select society, assembled together to listen to and encourage the art of modern banjo playing. I never saw a more appreciative or more intensely interested audience. There was not a murmur to disturb any part of the entertainment; intense stillness prevailed. Every person in that immense audience sat spell-bound as it were, and intent only upon catching every note that was played. At the end of each individual performance, the house fairly trembled with rapturous applause. The programme was a model one. Every number of Part I was a gem. One fact struck me forcibly. I was so near the stage, on the side occupied by the accompanist, that I had a fair view of the sheets containing the piano score. Several were badly worn, particularly one in MSS. At the conclusion of what should have been one of the most effective solos, the accompanist and soloist were at least half a measure apart. I attributed this to the dilapidated condition of the piano MSS., which I imagine was also poorly copied. In my opinion, a soloist should have his accompaniment plainly copied and as nearly whole as possible. Another point, a very important one to the accompanist, the performer should furnish the accompaniment to his accompanist as long before the entertainment as possible, so that he or she may have ample time to become perfectly familiar with the music. When a soloist furnishes poorly written, soiled or worn MSS., he has only himself to blame for any shortcomings in his accompanist. Many persons who read engraved or printed music at sight, have the utmost difficulty in reading even the plainest MSS. copies. I have known persons who were considered first-class readers, utterly fail when handed a MSS. copy to play from. Thus many an otherwise creditable performance has been spoiled by the soloist depending too much on guess work on the part of his accompanist.

I will not go into details with reference to Part I of the programme, each number of which was as rare a treat as it has ever been my privilege to listen to.

The second part, which consisted entirely of competitive club work, was good from first to last. There

was only one point in which my judgment differed from that of the judges. I had provided myself with a percentage sheet made by myself, and I paid the strictest attention to every part of the programme. My point of view, I imagine, was a more advantageous one than that which the judges occupied. They were seated in the orchestra stall, and were a little lower than the stage; they could not on that account hear as well, the performers who occupied the rear positions in the clubs. My seat was ten to twelve feet from, and four or five feet above the stage; on that account I believe I was in a better position to note points than the judges, there being nothing between the performers and myself to obstruct sight or sound. My average gave the Folwell Banjo Club, of Camden, third place instead of eighth. I have thought it over time and again, and have found no reason to change my average for that club. I candidly believe they ought to have had anywhere from second to fourth prize, but think third would be the proper place. Of course this is only my opinion. Better men for judges could nowhere have been found. It may be possible that they were right in their decisions as regards the Camden Club, but it may also be possible that I am right. We all have a right to our opinions, and there may have been as many opinions that night as there were people in the house.

The difference in the positions we occupied may account for the difference in opinions as regards the merits of this one club. Let that be as it may, the concert was a success. I only hope it was as big a success financially as it was musically. All honor and praise to Stewart, Armstrong and Gorton, who gave us a performance of which every one interested in the banjo, mandolin and guitar should be proud. After the concert Mr. George Carr and I spent the intervening hours between the close of the concert and 3 A. M. in talking about our favorite instrument. I found him an enthusiast as regards the advance of the banjo. He is thoroughly posted in matters pertaining to the instrument, and I believe has a bright future before him.

St. Paul, on the Beach at Long Branch,

February 3, 1896.

MY DEAR STEWART: "It just occurs to me that, while I am writing this in the first cabin of this ill-fated ocean steamer, you may be one of the crowd of curious humanity I just had a glimpse of over yonder, "On That Beautiful Shore," "So Near and Yet So Far," attracted thither to get a glimpse of the St. Paul taking a sand bath in midwinter. If so, please pardon me, old fellow, if I didn't come over to-day and "shake" with you. Circumstances do not permit me to leave the ship at present.

I tell you, Stewart, this sea shore advertising business is being overdone. It is well enough if you have an india rubber conscience and you are running a Jonah Hotel at the seashore during the flat season, to startle the world by capturing a sea serpent, or something else that can be seen without X rays, just to come out whole; but to get down to the scheme of stranding a fine ocean steamer, like the St. Paul, on this delightful beach, a whole mile before the season opens, is carrying it a little too far. And here I am stranded, not even having my *Thoroughbred* with me to console myself; losing dates, and waiting patiently for a storm to blow me off, with the consoling knowledge of running into another and perhaps worse storm when I get home to Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Jones' mother.

I had promised that when I took another trip across the pond I would take them with me — at Mrs. Jones' mother's expense — but I stole a march on them (in January). It was mean, but I could not help it. I will tell you about it, and also why I happen to be without my banjo at a time when I am most in need of it.

You remember while we were chatting together behind the scenes on the stage of the Academy of Music on the night of the Grand Banjo Concert and Prize Competition of Banjo Clubs — I think I was congratulating you on the complete success of your enterprise, or something of that sort — it was on my mind, anyway to do it — I was handed a telegram. Do you remember? It was from the Prince of Wales reminding me of the engagement I had made to visit him on the 23d, and show him how to put the seventh string on his six stringer without using a monkey wrench. It struck me at once on one of

the tender spots of my intellectual cranium that I only had seven days to do it in and that it behooved me to "Get a move on" right away.

Just then Vess L. Ossman came "off" with his right and left "bowers", Brooks and Denton, and I showed him the telegram after telling them

How nice they played,
And the hit they made,
Which threw the old Jade
Of the Simp' Meth'd grade
Way in the shade
When Denton said:
"I'm much afraid
We caused the maid
In the promenade
Of the great facade
Spill lemonade
On her dainty plaid."
Then Brooksies' said
On the hand grenade
This talk delayed —
"Enough!" he said.

Said Vess, with a good shake of my thimble hand,
"Old boy, you're in luck."

Said I "not any more than usual, thank you"

Said he, when are you going?"

Said I "As soon as I hear Farland."

Said he "Don't be in a hurry, old boy. We are going back to New York to-night, as we have paid for our breakfast there; and as it is likely that we will have a considerable number of cold days yet this winter, we do not intend to burn a breakfast paid for in advance. We would be pleased to have your company that far."

Just then Valentine Abt broke a string on his mandolin, and not wishing to create any further disturbance I acquiesced to the arrangement.

I at once hunted up my valet; dispatched him in all haste to the La Fayette to prepare my baggage and meet me with it at the Broad St. Station at midnight, same day.

After accepting the loan of fifty plunks from T. J. Armstrong, who has money to get (from Jones) I hastily penned a note to Mrs. Commonwealth stating that Tommy Glynn — pronounced Gline by a man from Baltimore — had just told me an old man, who had been a writer on a Boston paper, was very sick in a hospital in Georgia, Alabama, and, as it was rumored that he was suspected of knowing something of the early history of the banjo I was promptly engaged by Mr. S. S. Stewart, the maker of the famous banjos of that name, to go at once and take his dying statement and anything else that might be laying around loose, and got to Church St. without costing too much for freight; and not having the heart to say "no", and the urgency which this important case demanded, I did not have time to say good-bye.

I gave the note to Paul Eno — Uno Eno — the dear obliging Paul, — to hand to my wife in the morning when she came for her banjo lesson — after breakfast — You ought to see her look pretty in blue — on Fridays

I was trusting to my phenomenal good luck in getting over this little scheme with one of my usual fairy tales, accompanied with a little present, to my trusting wife and (her) mother when I got back, about the man was rather slow dying and I didn't dare leave him, or something of that sort; but this getting stranded business spoiled the whole shooting match. I could have got off with the rest but was just drawing to a pair of Jacks and had been sitting in the game with cold feet for the last three hours.

This is the first time I ever told a lie to my wife and I sincerely hope it will be the last — except under more favorable conditions.

Well, after these careful preliminaries, I went to the front of the house and took in the rest of the performance and was more than pleased and could scarcely realize the rapid progress the banjo has made since you began the struggle in your little room on Arch Street against old *Simple Method* before the discovery of the *Cathode* which latter makes it now "dead easy". I will not dwell further on this subject, except to say that to have been to the banjo concert at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, on the 16 of January, 1896, will ever remain the happiest event of my life, which I am at present enjoying. I was very sorry I missed saying good-bye to you after the show, but when I see you again I will.

We took the "owl train" train for New York and Brooks, Denton & Ossman and myself, assisted by

J. A. Silberberg, kept each other awake, and my witty sayings caused the gang to open their hearts and "chip" in for my breakfast, which consisted of two soft boiled eggs, bread and butter, coffee, cigarettes and a napkin for each. Also a "knockdown" to the landlady for me. After writing a neat little rhyme in her autograph album — something like this

Forget me not, I only ask
I his simple b ne (boon) of thee,
And let it be an easy task
Sometimes to think of me.

(As all landladies of my acquaintance are wont to do when making up their monthly accounts) I bid them all an affectionate adieu — which was truly heartrending — and took the steamer for Liverpool, London, assisted by my valet.

We reached our destination without doing much harm to previous records and after getting shaved I hastened at once to call on the Prince who was waiting for me in a London fog (hotel). I sent in my paste board and was at once very highly received — The Prince being on the third fret, (fl or) tenth position.

We proceeded at once to business — and claret — and after I toasted the Queen and was responded to in copious language by His Royal H'ness, I complimented him about his artisticness in manipulating the banjo, and, to be extremely polite, I ventured a little speech (while still able) in the way of praising the English "Jo".

The Prince winked his other eye and handing me one of his excellent cheroots, settled back in his truly graceful manner — so fearfully imitated in this country — and said:

"My dear Mr. Jones, let me assure you that while I am an Englishman and my countrymen look to me for and do receive my royal patronage and encouragement in their banjos and their style of playing, I must assert to you on the "Dead Q. T.," that there is nothing in all England that can focus or equal the S. S. Stewart Banjos, see?" And would you believe it he actually picked up his handsome leather case and took out a banjo which had the S. S. brand on it; and he said he procured it at great expense from one of your numerous agents in an incognito manner, and which he emphatically asserted was his favorite among his vast stock; and the way he played it and the delight with which he fingered it convinced me at once that he was in earnest. But I had to promise to let him down easy and not give him away too strong. I told him I would only mention it in my letter in a casual way — which letter I assured him was little noticed since the Monroe Doctrine broke out — and he was satisfied, and after promising to return my visit sometime after the appropriation bills were passed, I gracefully retired and at once took passage on the St. Paul for home forgetting in my haste to bring my valet and the rest of my baggage.

If Mrs. Jones should happen to call on you for an explanation don't give her any unnecessary information, and please let me down as easy as you can. Say something about me having been a loving patient and kind husband in the past, and she might fall back in a reminiscent mood and be inclined to forgive her truant husband this one little error and by all means don't let her have a whack at my mail — there may be something in it that needs suppressing. If you can't save my reputation, try to save me the expense of alimony at least. Thanking you very kindly,

I remain, yours,

Com. Jones.

An English correspondent wishes to know when we propose to publish the *Journal* monthly. He says: "All the others are publishing monthly, why don't you?"

The only reply we have to make is that we suppose one good square meal a day is better than two meals of sawdust.

Judging from the very meagre contents of the English periodicals, they are serving sawdust and pigskin for sandwiches. We don't hanker after that sort of diet.



FONTAINE MAURY.

The gentleman, whose portrait appears above, opened a studio some time ago, in Washington, D. C., at 611 7th St., N. W.

Mr. Maury has been a resident of Washington for some years, and is well and favorably known. His Banjo and Mandolin Studio should be liberally patronized.

He carries a stock of Stewart Banjos, and will be pleased to see those interested in that instrument at all times.

PLEASE REMEMBER

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A FRIENDLY REPLY TO MR. A. BAUR'S CRITICISM OF THE BOOK, "PRACTICAL HINTS ON MODERN BANJO PLAYING."

To S. S. Stewart, Esq., Publisher of the *Banjo and Guitar Journal*.

DEAR SIR—In the last issue of your *Journal*, in an article under the heading "Reminiscences of a Banjo Player" (twenty-sixth letter) the author, Mr. A. Baur, undertakes to criticise my book, "Practical Hints on Modern Banjo Playing," and in doing so makes statements that are both misleading and incorrect (doubtless unintentionally); therefore, while not objecting to his rather friendly criticism, or, in fact, any impartial criticism of my work, I feel it my duty to put the public in possession of the facts in the case, and endeavor to throw some light upon the purpose which the book referred to was intended to serve.

I have always refrained from speaking of myself, or giving any detailed account of my experience as a banjoist in print, (I apologize for doing so now), and for that reason these players in the East, who have never met me, and do not know just how extensive my experience has been, or what knowledge I may possess relating to the banjo or method of playing it, may, perhaps, resent my assumption of authority upon the subject of banjo playing. Be this as it may, I did not issue the book until I had carefully studied the subject for years, and I feel secure in saying that no similar work of equal correctness of detail or value to the student has ever been published in this or any other country.

It is true that many other banjoists are capable of doing all I have done in giving "Practical Hints" to the public, and perhaps some of them could have accomplished much more, but, surely, it is no fault of mine that they have failed to do it. The subject matter of the work is in line with the instructions given to their pupils by the leading artists of the day, and my part has simply been to do what had not been done before, viz.: furnish necessary information as to the technical details of banjo playing, clothed in readable language, yet making the work short and to the point, so that the average student could understand it.

Mr. Baur's article is so worded as to create the false impression in the minds of many who have not read the book, that a considerable part of the work is devoted to a historical account of the early days of the banjo, and the original method of tuning the instrument, so far as known. Nothing could be farther from the truth. "Practical Hints on Modern Banjo Playing," as the title should clearly indicate, is simply a short, concise and instructive treatise on banjo playing, giving all the essential details of tuning, right and left hand fingering, the tremolo, etc., and does not relate, even remotely, to the early history of the method of tuning, or respecting any real or fancied changes, except in an incidental way, necessary in an instructive work of the kind.

Mr. Baur's article is all the more misleading because he merely criticises statements made in the first chapter, and a foot-note added thereto, and does not even hint at the theme of the book, which is simply, "how to play the banjo, and play it well, according to the most approved modern methods." The purpose of the little book is to supply that information, and I have the testimony of a number of the greatest artists in America to the fact that it fulfils its mission thoroughly. Mr. Baur says, "the author of 'Practical Hints' is mistaken when he says that Briggs' Banjo Instructor was the only book ever published giving the tuning as G." My reply to this is, that I did not make any such statement. What I did say was, "Briggs' method is the only one I have ever been able to discover giving the tuning as G, so it must be regarded as an exception, and hardly to be considered." I did not state that Briggs' method was the only one of the kind published; but I did, and do state most emphatically, that it is the only one I have ever seen, giving the G tuning, purporting to have been written by a well-known banjoist, and I have investigated the matter pretty thoroughly, having been a student of the banjo since 1878, and have purchased nearly every method I could find during that time. Such books as I was positive were written by parties who knew little or nothing of the banjo, I did not take into consideration at all, and do not think anyone should, in writing an instructive work

like "Practical Hints," as such unworthy examples only serve to confuse the amateur, without benefiting him in any way. I only mentioned Briggs' method, because it bears the name of a banjoist who was celebrated in his day.

While it is true that Briggs' and many other methods were published long before I began to study the banjo, all or nearly all of them, were to be purchased of the publishers within my time, and can probably be had to-day. I was the possessor, four years ago, of nearly every banjo method published within the past twenty years, and a number that were issued before that time, as well as many Mss. by noted banjoists that have never been published; but, unfortunately, my studio and contents in the Deardorff Building, Kansas City, were entirely destroyed by fire, January 17th, 1892, not so much as a scrap of writing paper being saved, and I thus lost a most valuable collection of music and books which I had been collecting for 12 years and which it is practically impossible to replace.

Mr. Baur names two books as giving the tuning of the banjo bass string as G, and says he knows of several others, the names of which he cannot recall. Even if there should be others, they must still be regarded as exceptions, as the majority rules always, and to place a mild estimate, I will undertake to name 20 methods giving the tuning as A, to every one giving the tuning as G. The date on which Mr. Briggs' method was published, or whether it was published before or after his death, is immaterial to the points at issue. Having lost the collection of books and music referred to, I am unable at this time to make any positive statements as to the contents of Briggs' method, but I do not consider that it has any bearing on the subject, as I wrote nothing of the structure of Briggs', or any other method, but confined myself as closely as possible to my theme, viz.: "Modern Banjo Playing."

In quoting the foot-note relating to the A and G tunings, Mr. Baur did not quote me accurately, as he failed to quote the closing sentence, which explains my position fully, and at the same time is an accurate statement of the facts, which overrules all his objections, as it is unanswerable. The sentence is, "at least, the bass string has been noted as A ever since music worthy of the name has been written for the banjo, and it was not my purpose to go farther than this in a work on Modern Banjo Playing." This statement places the matter in its true light. Mr. Baur says that it is a mistake to say that "the change to smaller instruments has been gradual, and, while we have been slowly raising the pitch as the instruments were made smaller, no change has been made in notation." I will undertake to prove to the satisfaction of every one interested, that it is Mr. Baur who is mistaken.

I do not claim to be one of the pioneer banjoists, nor do I pretend to have been a banjoist twenty years ago; nevertheless, I have studied the instrument for seventeen years, as well as its history, and, unlike most banjoists, I have never engaged in any other profession or business, even for a day. I have been a professional banjoist for fifteen years, having taught in many cities, and have traveled considerably, thereby meeting nearly all the prominent banjoists of recent years, as well as a great many "old timers." I taught the banjo in Chicago for about six years, and while there was employed by a prominent banjo manufacturer to test all instruments sent out, and give instruction to all those who desired it. I was taught to read music when but a mere child by my father (who was a fine amateur musician) and understood the rudiments of music thoroughly before taking up the study of the banjo; on this account, my services were in demand, as fifteen years ago there were comparatively very few professionals who taught the banjo by note, or indeed, who could read music themselves. Just at this time these professionals began to see the necessity of learning to read music so as to teach correctly, and thus be able to retain their pupils; so many of them applied to me for instruction, and there are banjoists on the stage to-day, as well as a number of teachers, (some of whom are well-known) in Chicago and elsewhere, who received all their instruction from me.

I have heard the late Horace Weston and E. M. Hall play by the hour, and at a time when they were pronounced the greatest players of the day; I have heard them both in public and in private. In 1880 they were considered wonderful performers, and the

Usual Discounts. Newport, Vermont.